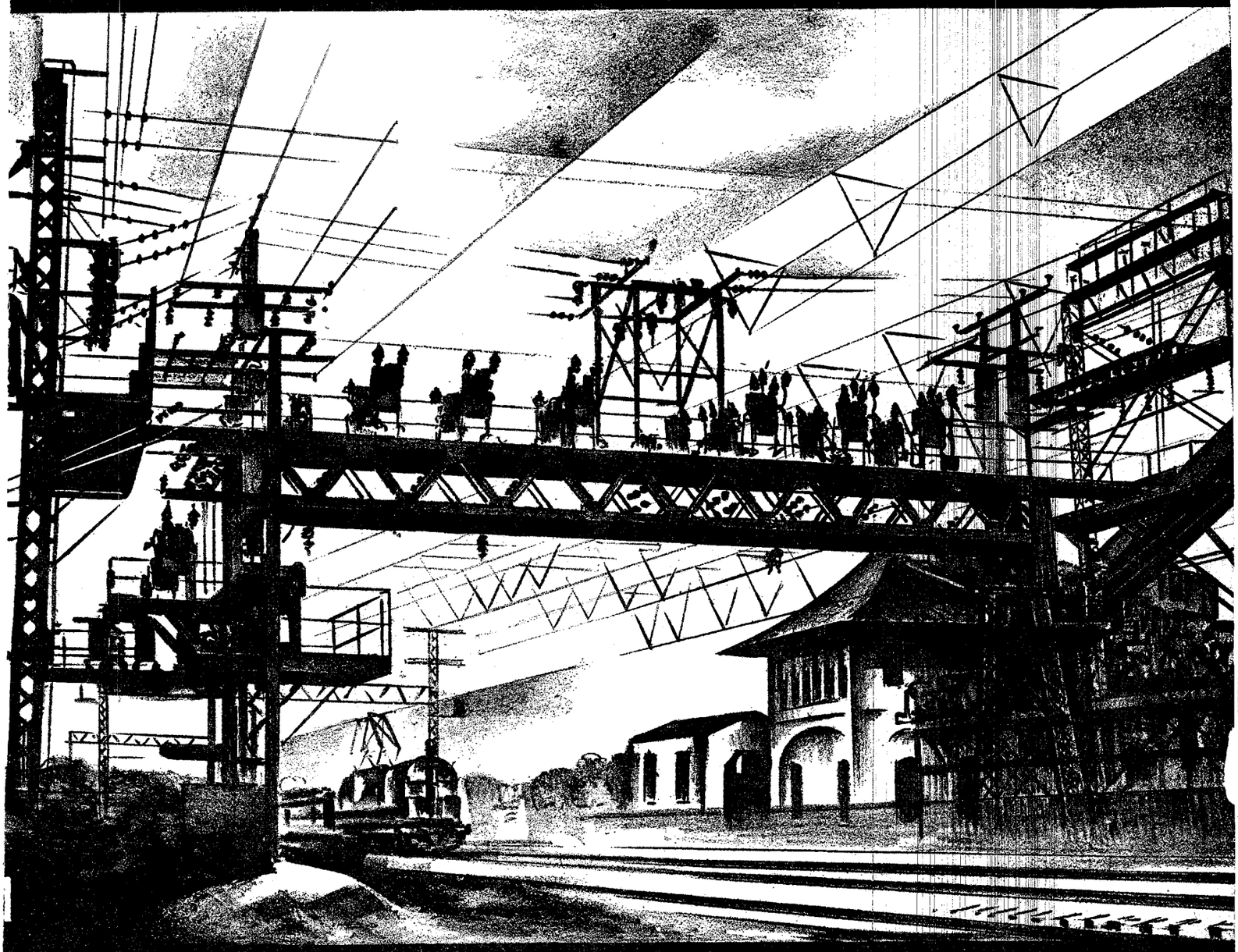
NEW MASSES

ANUARY 12, 1937 FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY



Madrid's International Volunteers *by* James Hawthorne

A Groundhog's Death *by* Jack Conroy

Brisbane: Champion of the Gorilla *by* Peter Young

The Historical Novel *by* Jack Lindsay

Whither the Railroad Unions? *by* Bernard Harden

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BETWEEN OURSELVES

SINCE the defeat of the American Fourth Estate last Election Day, it has become something of a fad to laugh at the phrase "the power of the press." Well, perhaps it is a question of whose press and the direction it is going. In any case, since our editorial in the last issue, reporting the formation of the American Society for Technical Aid to Spanish Democracy (with temporary headquarters at our offices) and urging our readers to help it in every way, we have been having our own march of time.

Beginning last Friday, there has been a steady stream of applicants, ready to go to Spain to put their services at the disposal of the Popular Front government. There have been engineers, mechanics, electricians, foundrymen, chauffeurs, specialists in child care, chemists—almost everything you could think of. The idea is as follows: first, Spain is not rich in industrial development, and needs technical stiffening to put her industries and transport on a footing which will enable her to compete with the mechanization placed at Franco's disposal by Italy and Germany; second, Spanish workers are needed at the battlefront, and must be released from the machine-shops, railroads, power stations by skilled labor, technicians, etc., from the ranks of the world working-class movement.

We can report that the Society for Technical Aid (now in its own offices in Room 70, 31 E. 27th St., New York) is confident that what was an idea is now a going concern, and that more applicants, especially those skilled in heavy industry — automobile and electricity in particular — are wanted, and if you would like to help, but cannot go, funds can be sent direct to the Society.

And while we are speaking of Spain, the NEW MASSES will mark the first six months of the Spanish civil war with a special Spanish issue—the issue of January 26, week after next. This will be an enlarged issue, and will carry in the neighborhood of a dozen features on various aspects of the situation in Spain as it has developed over the six-months period. The emphasis of the issue will be not upon the immediate news situation of the moment, but upon the meaning in terms of the past and future of the position of the government, of culture, of international relations, of the revolutionary movement during the six-months period. The contributors to this issue will be outstanding experts here and abroad. This will be a notable issue which everyone will want to keep and re-read.

Another forthcoming event which many of our readers will want to know about will be the publication of an article by Vicente Lombardo Toledano, head of the Confederation of Mexican Workers (corresponding to the American Federation of Labor), explaining why the Mexican labor movement opposed the admission of Leon Trotsky to that country.

Next week we will publish an article by M. R. Bendiner, one of our editors, who was a journalist in Washington before he joined our staff, on the legislative problems facing the new Congress.

A great loss to the revolutionary movement was the death this week on the Spanish battlefront of Ralph Fox, brilliant British writer and political economist, whom our readers will remember as the author of "The Exiles of Lisbon" in a recent issue, and as the author of a biography of Lenin.

Who's Who

JAMES HAWTHORNE continues to be our correspondent in Madrid.

Charmion von Wiegand is well known for her art criticisms, which have appeared in *Art Front, New Theatre,* and elsewhere.

Jack Conroy is perhaps best known for his novel *The Disinherited,* possibly the most widely sold item of proletarian fiction in recent years.

Bernard Harden is active in organization work in the transportation unions.

Jack Lindsay is the English social historian who wrote the article "Freud's Error" which appeared in our issue of December 22.

Marian Burrows is a free-lance journalist who makes her NEW MASSES debut with her biographical sketch of Kurt Weill in this issue.

The woodcut by Everardo Ramirez is one of a collection by L.E.A.R. (Mexico) artists on view until January 9 at the A.C.A. Gallery, New York, under the sponsorship of the Friends of the Mexican People.

H. H. Lewis's poetry has appeared before in our pages, as well as in the *Southern Worker* and other periodicals.

Peter Young is a newspaperman who until very recently was associated with the Hearst organization which he served in various capacities for a number of years.

Abraham Harritan, who did the oil reproduced on page 23, is one of the directors of the American Artists School in New York.

Rockwell Kent's drawing on page 28 is from the Heritage Press edition of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass.*

S. Funaroff, who wrote the "poem for a new year" in this issue, is an old contributor to this magazine, whose work has also appeared in *Partisan Review* and elsewhere.

What's What

EDITOR JOSEPH FREEMAN will be among those who will speak at a banquet for Anna Louise Strong at the Manhattan Opera House, New York, Wednesday, January 13. Miss Strong is now on her way home from Spain, where she interviewed the outstanding leaders of the famous International Brigade defending Madrid. We hope to publish certain of these interviews in early issues. Among the other speakers and guests of honor are Pearl S. Buck, Maurice Hindus, Albert Rhys Williams, and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn.

As a publication recently celebrating an important anniversary, we greet the thirteenth birthday of the *Daily Worker,* which will celebrate the occasion on Sunday evening, January 10, at the St. Nicholas Palace, New York. The guest of honor will be Tim Buck, general secretary of the Canadian Communist Party, who will make his first public appearance in New York on this occasion.

The letter from Sophia Delza in this issue and an article by Owen Burke which we will publish next week raise important questions concerning the aesthetics of the dance. One important question in this connection is the size of the audience and the hall where a given recital is being performed. New York readers of the NEW MASSES will have an opportunity to form their own opinion on this question Friday night, January 15, when Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman, plus their concert groups, will give a performance under the auspices of the International Labor Defense in the Hippodrome, believed to be the largest hall ever used for a dance recital in this country.

Flashbacks

AS members of the Workers' Alliance swing into action in the early weeks of the New Year, striving to force W.P.A. jobs and adequate relief from post-election Roosevelt, they keep alive a long tradition. On Jan. 9, 1808, sailors, prevented from manning ships

by the Embargo, marched to City Hall, demanded relief for the first time in American history, got it. . . . During the depression of 1874, thousands of New York's unemployed, meeting on January 13, in Tompkins Sq., were attacked so mercilessly by police that one infuriated witness, the capitalist reporter, John Swinton, resolved to embark on what proved to be a long career as a labor agitator. A calculating young cigar maker, seeing the same police violence from his hiding place in a cellar entrance, also made a decision that day affecting the rest of his life. "There is nothing in this radical business," he reasoned. "See what the cops do to Reds." His name was Sam Gompers.

THIS WEEK

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NEW MASSES
JANUARY 12, 1937

Woodcut by Helios Gomez

Madrid's International Volunteers

The famous body of troops has not only its colorful side, but a meaning for the future

By James Hawthorne

WAR discipline, but not barrack discipline. Every member of the People's Army must be able, if he is the last man of his unit alive, to carry out alone the task assigned to his unit. Therefore he must understand perfectly the nature of the operation. Obedience to one's commanders. But faith in one's men! In a dictatorship, in a "democracy of a minority, barrack discipline is essential, for a thinking discipline will end in revolution. It is only in a democracy without quotation marks that confidence in the rank and file can supplement obedience to leaders. Only a People's Army can turn loose the initiative of every private. Therefore the men of a People's Army are beings distinct from those of a regular army, and its officers in no way resemble the stuffed shirts of staff headquarters or the natural brutes usually designated for top sergeant.

I. *The Man in Command:* General Alexei Kleber, Eleventh Brigade commander and top leader of the Northern Sector of the Madrid area, has a lifetime record of fighting in popular causes. Military technique at his command is blended with the experience of building armies in the trying circumstances of revolution and popular resistance to reactionary coups. Kleber is a Canadian citizen of mixed blood, with German, perhaps, predominant. He spent many years in the United States in New York, San Francisco, etc. In 1918 he took part in the defense of the Russian Revolution against the interventionists. He makes no secret of the fact that he is an ardent worker for the Third International. He has devoted himself to military studies since 1914, and has written on both military and political themes, "because it is impossible to separate the one from the other." Improvised armies, the channelizing of the revolutionary forces of a people, are his lifework. The norms of regular armies are insufficient here (how well the German General Staff should know this).

General Kleber (not related to the Kleber of Napoleon's staff) has more than theoretic knowledge of revolutionary-military art. He participated in the German and Russian revolutions as well as the Chinese Civil Wars. His were responsible posts. "But don't say I won the Russian Revolution," he remarked to a correspondent, "because I didn't."

Smiling, pleasant, patient, he answers our questions with a witty turn if he feels that they are indiscreet, but carefully and precisely if they are important. Thus he explains why he came to Spain. "First, because Thaelmann said that we must fight fascism wherever it shows its head. And second, because if international fascism, trying to colonize a great nation such as Spain, is beaten here, we will avoid a new great war in Europe. Stalin has said, 'The peoples want peace.' Fascism, brutal expression of imperialism, wants war. We must crack the teeth of fascism, and Spain is the place where that must be done."

In talking to a military man during war time, everyone finds that all the things he wants to know belong to the class of indiscreet questions. Still, we find a roundabout way of asking how long the war will last. He analyzed the factors at work. The situation, he felt, depended on nerves. Those of the enemy, after three weeks of defeat and disillusionment, are at the breaking point. The Moors no longer obey readily. At this moment the rebel front can be cracked by the impetus of July, by the stormy assault that took the La Montaña barracks—but this time on a wide scale on a dozen fronts. Loyalist morale has improved remarkably; the republican army has improved its technique, organization, and discipline, it is much better armed than it was. Subject always to the thousand hazards of war, a firm attack on all fronts could clear the situation in a month.

Kleber, with an unpretentious modesty, is anxious that we know he is not alone in the command. Dozens of proven fighters of the working class and of the cause of democracy are on his staff. Commandant Hans, like himself a military-political leader; Ludwig Renn, noted anti-fascist writer: two representatives of the real Germany. Mario Nicoletti, companion of Mussolini in 1912, prisoner of Mussolini in later years; and Luigi Gallo: two political commissars from Italy. Major Dumont and Colonel Vicente of France; the Mexican artillery marvel, Lt.-Col. Annibal Gabucio. Lukacs, Hungarian commander of the latest detachment to arrive. And Spain is

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widely represented: the composer Durán is a commander here; Major Palacios with a highly disciplined C.N.T. trade-union column; Majors Enciso and Ortega with their battalion of the Presidential Guard; Major José María Galán, brother of the Galán who rose in Jaca in December, 1930, giving the premature signal for the April revolution. Tried in the street defense of democratic liberties, hardened in concentration camps, they have become the terror of the fascists.

II. *The Twelfth Brigade:* This is made up of three battalions named after Thaelmann, Garibaldi, and Marty. These are respectively German, Italian, and Franco-Belgian. The Thaelmann Battalion commands the awe even of the formidable International Brigadiers. Their losses have been heavy, because they have insisted on answering all calls for men who are ready to die. "No wonder Hitler is scared of the German Communists," an English member of the brigade remarked to me. In command of the Thaelmann Battalion is Ludwig Renn, author of the anti-imperialist books, *War* and *Post-War,* and long familiar with the concentration camps. Renn tells us that the battalion was formed of German anti-fascists resident in Spain, many of them already fighting in Aragon, when the idea was conceived of the International Brigades. The plan caught on quickly. Men who had fought in the streets of Hamburg against the Brown Shirts began to find their way to Barcelona. A battalion of Frenchmen, Yugoslavs, and Poles was formed in Albacete; another with two companies of Germans, one of Yugoslavs, and one of Poles.

Luigi Gallo is political commissar of the Twelfth Brigade. We find him busy editing their official organ. Wide-awake soldiers want to know what is going on in the world. A radio in the office picks up foreign and rebel stations. A news service often obtains items before they are published in Madrid. The paper, like the *Peuple en Armes* of the Eleventh Brigade, is read line for line in the advance posts. Captain Addy Mogg, who has taken over the political responsibility for the Thaelmann Battalion, drops in. He looks like a British clubman, and comes from the German upper bourgeoisie. He was a Prussian officer, but, like General Lukacs, had time to think and passed into the ranks of the Communists. He stops to talk for a moment with Hans Beimler,* who escaped from a concentration camp at Munich. With him is an Austrian worker who escaped from a Swiss jail. Gustav Regler, author of *The Saar in Flames,* brings in an article. The stoutest fighters for world culture know their places in the ranks of the defenders of democracy, human decency, and intellectual freedom.

General Lukacs, as commander of the Twelfth Brigade, certainly deserves a detailed biography—if only there were not so many amazing men in the International Column! Born in what is now Czechoslovakia, but was then the northern part of Hungary, he was a reserve officer in a regiment of Hungarian hussars at the outbreak of the Great War. In 1916 he was captured by the Russians. He had time to think in the czarist prisons, to talk in whispers with men of ideas, to develop at the pace of war and revolution. Red October freed him. He at once took command of a battalion of foreign defenders of the revolution against Wrangel and Denikin on the eastern front. In 1919 he fought Kolchak. In 1920 he was named brigadier-general, and under the direct command of Budyenni and Voroshilov had a leading role in the victory of Perekop. How natural it seems to him to be fighting interventionists in Spain in 1936!

We could fill volumes with the lives of the leaders. But let us not forget the rank and file—a rank and file full of color, made up of men who can replace those leaders over and over as the war may dictate. The Austrian armorer who miraculously built an armory for the brigade out of nothing. The bank employee. The Jews from Poland who have crushed the legend of the shivering Israelite waiting helplessly to be attacked by his enemies.

We find a moment to talk with the student, Carlos Wainer. He lived in Cologne and belonged to a Catholic student association. Thru it he was unfortunate enough to espouse Christian Socialism, and after the Nazi victory in Germany did two prison terms. As he couldn't seem to come to an understanding with the German gods about the worship of the Aryan, he found a secret route out of Germany. And now he sits on a bridge where dumdum bullets whiz by, reading the progress of the war against international fascism.

Shouts draw us away to the field kitchen, which the Italian cooks call Ristorante Italiano. It seems a wounded pig has been caught, and as it is only a leg wound can be cured—in the pot. In Burgos they say the loyalists go hungry, but the pot is very full here.

"How do you eat?" I ask an eighteen-year-old British boy.

"It's no war at all," he answers. "Meat, eggs, vegetables, and good cooking. Come up and see us some time!"

And the boy is the nephew of ultra-con-

Wife and Children of a Worker-Soldier Portrait by Moses Soyer

* Since this was written, Beimler was killed in action, leading his battalion in a charge.—THE EDITORS.

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servative Winston Churchill. Despite England's fence-straddling, even the diehard families find themselves contributing, in the spirit of Byron and Shelley, to the struggle for freedom of a heroic people.

III. *The Role of the International Brigades:* Just what is the International Column and what does it expect to be? I remember we asked that without result for some weeks before the anti-fascist fighters appeared on the Madrid scene. It was all very well to say vaguely that they were the representatives of the International People's Front, but there was many a "neutral" foreigner in Madrid to inform the questioner: "The Internationals are simply Red Army Men from Russia!" And to such a profound speculation, "objective" newspaper men nodded their heads gravely, saying, "That's possible."

That canard blushed itself away when the first (called Eleventh Brigade) got into action. The "Red Army men from Russia" turned out to be preëminently French and Polish, while the later Twelfth Brigade was German, Italian, and Franco-Belgian. Around these dominant strains in the two brigades were grouped representatives of every European country. In the French section of the Eleventh Brigade there were some fifty English-speaking volunteers (American, Canadian, British, Australian). The tiny spots on the map had their representatives: Denmark, Switzerland, Esthonia, and so on. Belgium gave over a thousand stout fighters!

The "neutral" enemies of the legitimate government of Spain took a new line. Very well, the Soviet Union had cleverly avoided compromising herself. She had not sent troops. She had called upon Communists of all countries to rush to Spain. The fact remains, they argued, that the republican army is not Spanish. Thus they drew an analogy, in bad faith, between the African shock troops and foreign technicians constituting the whole force of the rebel attack, and the international anti-fascist volunteers aiding the limitless thousands of Spanish fighters in the popular cause. Rebel news sources were more realistic. They spoke of the possibility of "delay" in the capture of Madrid because against Franco's single line of attackers the government could pour virtually inexhaustible reserves. Obviously three thousand International Brigadiers then moving into line could not constitute reserves! Reserves: that was the whole Spanish people. Then there is another difference between the Foreign Legion and the International Brigades. Among the thousands of militiamen, the hundreds of thousands of mobilized workers, intellectuals, democrats, the world anti-fascists move with comfort and content. Fighters in one cause, comrades against a common enemy, there is nothing in their situation to invite comparison with that of the German-Italian fascists and the Moors who circulate in civil centers among a people largely hostile to them.

From their arrival the Internationals began winning the respect of the Spanish people. At the front they worked side by side in common operations with the militia. Indeed, they spread their training and discipline in some cases by scattering their men at regular intervals through militia battalions and thus carrying out attacks. And in the cities, in Madrid, they fraternized with the whole people. Various organizations began to adopt given units of the brigades. In this way fraternization passed from an exalted symbolic unity to a warm personal relationship. Individual friendships were formed. When Madrid anti-fascists knew, and sipped coffee with, individual Polish anti-fascists, their sentiments evolved. They were men alike, anti-fascists alike, fighters alike for a world ideal. Respect and admiration turned into warm human love.

Hundreds of letters to the brigades accumulated. The Women's Anti-fascist Committee presented them with a banner. The Unified Socialist Youth held great meetings in their honor. Aware that no arrangements had been made to pay the brigadiers, the Communist cell in the Hutchinson Factory organized a collection for them. Section West of the Communist Party adopted a French Battalion. And so on: in Spain, where the Communists go, the people go, for the huge youth organization and the women's groups fully accept the leadership of the party in the defense of the democratic Republic. Under that leadership the people not only welcomed the International Column, but copied its best features.

With the full confidence and love of the masses, the brigades became a powerful force for the spread of essential military-political ideas. They deserve a great measure of the credit for the rapid acceptance by the Anarchists of strict military discipline. Two Anarchist columns that shared an action and a front with the brigadiers praised the Internationals to the skies, and formulated within the National Confederation of Labor and Iberian Anarchist Federation the demand for discipline. A few months ago the chief hindrance to the establishment of that strict central authority demanded by the war, was the fractionalism of the Anarcho-Syndicalists. A poster on the walls of all Spain reflected their stubborn creed of "Liberty" as against the reality of war. "Let us organize indiscipline," the poster said. Now Juan Peyró, one of their representatives in the cabinet, announces the abandonment of this position. "It is necessary that you, lovers of indiscipline, realize that now we must have a war discipline. . . . The members of the National Confederation of Labor did not go into the government to represent indiscipline, but, on the contrary, to demand discipline and the unified command. It is not permissible that there be six general staffs in the central sector, each of them independent."

That the International Column was largely responsible for the fullness of the Confederation shift soon received a practical proof. General Kleber, commander of the Twelfth Brigade, was placed in command of the northern section of the Madrid front. As there are units of all groups and types operating here, this was the creation of a model unified command, the first in Spain. Kleber could be appointed because of the fine interpenetration of the Brigades and the Militias, and the spread of the International standard of discipline, which had convinced all groups that the army was not the instrument of parties or unions. As put by Peyró, "we Anarchists have nothing to do with running the war; that is the affair of the military men." And Republicans, Socialists, Communists, and Anarchists alike agreed that General Kleber was a first-class military man—of the people.

Now that the people know the Column better, they no longer think of the foreign anti-fascists as miracle men come to save Spain, a view reflected in the first days by the persistent "Viva Rusia" they shouted at Frenchmen and Poles. In those days they could not believe that the Internationals were other than Russians. The Soviet Union had stood by Spain. France and England had deserted. How could these be Frenchmen and Englishmen? Once they had learned that here were direct representatives of the French people, the Polish, German, Italian peoples, the real significance of the Brigades at last took form. They were not here as saviors, but as comrades experienced in fighting Reaction, to aid and encourage the Spaniards in their improvised defense against the fascist assault. Spanish battalions began to demand a place in the Column.

Units that had fought in the Guadarramas in July and maintained a high morale even in the discouraging days of September were so incorporated. This was more than an extension of fraternization; this was the outline of the real and unforeseen meaning of the Column. The International Brigades were paving the way for an international people's army, the army of the international people's front. The treachery of the military fascists had united virtually the whole Spanish people in arms against Reaction. Now the intermeddling of Hitler and Mussolini had provoked the arming of world democracy and the world proletariat against the war-makers. In their efforts to isolate the Soviet Union, the Nazis and Blackshirts had but created a new and tremendous reservoir of arms for the defense of liberty and progress, whether in Spain, China, or the U.S.S.R.

K. L.

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Chirico and Picasso

Two much-discussed modern artists represent different tendencies in a cultural milieu affected by the ups and downs of the economic world

By Charmion von Wiegand

THE ups and downs of capitalism are mirrored not only in stock market quotations but in modern painting. Both finance and art are frantically seeking to solve basic, mortal contradictions in the system in their own terms. Painting transmutes these crises in the economic world into its æsthetic and formal terms, a fact which had perhaps no better exemplification than in the lives and work of Picasso and Chirico, both of whom have recently come under special notice as a consequence of retrospective shows in New York galleries this season. Chirico, born in Greece in 1888 of Italian parentage, has been declared both a Surrealist and a pure classic painter. Picasso, born in Spain in 1881, is the leader of French painting.

While Picasso has held public attention almost since the beginning of the century, Chirico became a fashion only in the last five years—a period coinciding with the rise of fascism in Europe. His is an art which appeals directly to the reactionary intelligentsia seeking ideological support for fascism. It is clear that the destructive and uncreative movement, fascism, can develop no unity of thought and that therefore it is forced to plunder its ideas from Marxism, mysticism, and mythology, mixing them in a strange distorted *mélange* of disintegration.

The ups and downs of capitalism are the fundamental reason *why* a splendid artist like Picasso, instead of creating a single great style in art, has gone through the whole history of western art in the course of twenty years. This see-saw of change is not due to a desire to pleasure a capricious market or to express originality so much as to the deep need of rescuing some synthesis from the ever-increasing confusion of social life. Chirico, in his own way, reflects this intermittent fever of change, but since he is less intuitively aware and less profoundly conscious of the conflict, his work appears more unified than that of Picasso. His range is much smaller. While both painters are necessarily representative of the old class, their direction marks them as moving toward opposite poles.

Chirico has never been a classic artist. His work is an attack on the Greco-Roman heritage of our culture. By nature necromantic and decadent, he deals with the corruption of the classic ideal, expressed in canvases populated with legendary heroes in togas, fallen Ionic columns, shattered pediments, wooden horses, Roman gladiators, marbelized arenas, and gilded laurel wreaths. These gaudy props from a provincial Roman circus hide ideas and feelings directly antipathetic to classic art. In this they are related to the façade of classicism with which fascism masks its naked brutality and intellectual bankruptcy —for instance, its use of Roman *fasces* in Italy, of standards of Roman legions in Germany. Such historic hocus-pocus is merely a demagogic gesture toward the people. Chirico's painting mirrors this pseudo-classic masque of anarchy, yet it would be a mistake to confuse him with a real fascist artist. No matter how adulterated his art, he remains in the European tradition, albeit at the end of its road. The official fascist painters, so advertised in the late Venice international exhibition, dwell in no cultural *milieu;* they merely manufacture debased illustrations of modernism or hand-made chromos of the classics.

In his late work, Chirico has approached one step nearer this fascist disintegration. In his continuous exploration of the limits of corruption, he has descended to the production of chromos, as in several horse pictures à la Delacroix and two mawkish landscapes, "Flying Phantom." Such taste is akin to the fashionable resurrection of the Victorian whatnot. In an effete society, imitation acquires its own value as genuineness once had, so that one prefers marbelized wall paper to marble, wax flowers to real ones. This is no new phenomenon in history, as witness the late Pompeiian and Roman frescoes.

In sharp contrast to Chirico, Picasso, despite some excursions into decadent bypaths (his Alexandrian water colors) has followed in the great line of European tradition, seeking always to analyze form in space without the use of illusionist or illustrative means. Chirico deals with classicist motifs at the moment of their destruction under the impact of Christian ideas, selecting as models the debased, mixed art of the late Roman Empire. Picasso's work stems directly from the Renaissance —that robust period when the rising bourgeois class affirmed its faith in corporeal reality and set up the classic as its ideal, instinctively sensing the social kinship between the new commercial capitalism and the Greco-Roman world whose power also stemmed from commerce. In such periods of expansion, exploitation, and competition, earthly and individual man, long hidden under the hieratic priest robes, becomes the central theme of art, the æsthetic task, the conquest of anatomy and perspective. As capitalism developed to a higher form, the static aspects of the problem

Coffee and

Caucus

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were solved and by Michelangelo's time, the artist was wrestling with the problem of dynamic movement. In this epoch, painting is seized by an almost cosmic rhythm in which the great bodies extricated from the Palatean calm of marble move like storms through space—Michelangelo, Tintoretto, El Greco.

If Picasso, coming at the very end of this tradition, has found no solution to his problem, this is due chiefly to the class and the historic moment in which he is placed. The flower of his experiments, Cubism, has contributed directly to modern life. Thus he represents on the one hand a great technical advance, but in content he remains behind the simple but moving art of its beginnings—for instance, Giotto. Humanism on which our culture has been based is destroyed by mechanism. Picasso has divested form of all human semblance, dissecting it into dismembered and isolated fragments unrelated to living organic life. Like X-ray portraits where only the structural foundation of an organism is preserved, man and his physical body, the chief concern of classic and Renaissance art—is superseded by an impersonal architecture of formal structure.

Chirico solved the problem of form by a complete evasion. His early lyric paintings, where the long shadow of late afternoon and of green twilight inundates landscapes of ruined cities sleeping by the wine-dark sea, gave us many charming illustrations. This illustrated elegy on the death of time and space, this romantic yearning for the lost golden age of Greece, is now supplanted by ornament. Movement, expressed in his fantastic horses, is stilled—in the present pictures a horse dies on the seashore; another horse is placed alive in a sarcophagus, and finally two dead horses are displayed in a store window. At the same time, the hushed nacreous grey of twilight is flushed with a brownish golden tone. The deliberate mystifying "Mysterious Bathers" series displays nude youths bathing in a river of geometric herringbone design of endless pattern—their bodies already submerged in the muddy brown net, while over all is poured the somber gold light of the mosaic art. The world of magic sends its shimmering golden light over the world of the dying senses. A new iconoclasm from the east destroys the classic motifs. Chirico's art has become a graphic ornament in two dimensions—he too has come to the end of a road.

Cat-Nap

Extra-Curricular

Strangely Picasso in his own late work repudiates form in the sense of volume. Five monumental paintings of 1933-4 display a frankly two-dimensional pattern in which color circulates like a warm bloodstream through rhythmic arabesques. The old themes are used: the woman and her mirror, the Red Hat, the woman holding a book, but there is something new in the monumental patterns akin to Surrealist forms but on a grand scale. Picasso moving in the main line of our cultural development has also come to the end of a road. The ruling class of a dying society is totally unable to offer any new content for a living art. But while Chirico offers us no beginning, one discerns in these paintings of Picasso a possibility of a new art—either mural or moving as in cinema. Following in the tradition of humanism, Picasso has carried it to its logical end—the destruction of man—and now he destroys the abstract form in which he had so skillfully embalmed him. It is left for a new and progressive class to carry on at this point—for only the working class is healthy and strong enough to build a new humanism on a constructive basis and to solve the critical problem of the human relationships in society.

SIT-IN STRIKE

Drawn by Winifred Milius during the recent protest of Chicago W.P.A. workers

Chess

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The Spider and the Clock

(For a New Year)

By S. Funaroff

"A UNIVERSITY biologist has been studying the battle of a hairy black arachnid to harness the moving hands of an alarm clock in its silken web."—*News Item.*

I

Here weaves a spider, and here a clock,
Man-fashioned, for man weaves, but not the whole cloth,
Time's tapestry, history at a midnight hour,
Last hour of the last midnight of the year
When the year's first dawn begins.

Hunger marches on the capitals.
Congress is in session.
The ambassadors from France and Berlin
Shake hands; the borders bristle with cannon.
And parliament burns. The House is on fire.
Fires flame on the frontiers.
Through smoke and flame and ashes,
The general rides on a coal black horse.

Four limbs crossed hatchet-wise about the face of the clock,
Old wisebeard spins his mathematical web.
Forward and back. Forward and back.
Forward or back?

Oh here's a Joshua set to tame the sun!
Blow your horn Joshua!
Blow!
Congress will open with a prayer,
The House will be in order . . . and the priest's ideal
Make irresistible public appeal.

The senator from Wall Street speaks.
Tin-horns, lip-farts, rattlers, confetti.
The leader, dressed in rags, slums among the people.
But his paunch shows, his stink is not earthly.
He pats the guileless head of a child;
He smiles, and the guns of his warships roar.
Cheers. He is beneficent. He is kind to his people.
His smiling bust is in the best boudoirs.

Toot! Toot! The calliope grinds an old tune.
The card sharp offers a new deal.
His barker's voice. Take a chance, folks,
Bring home the kewpie to your wife and kiddies.
Jazz-band touted heroes, promises listened to,
Last year's vomit regurgitated,
Retched in your face.
You win the cigar.

But when the last tune fades and the lights go out
And you grope your way, in fear, through the dark?
After the last attraction, walk home. And find:
Crumbs in the breadbox, the landlord at the door.

The friend of Cæsar's friend murders the friend
Who murders Cæsar. The juggler of knives
Slits his own throat. Tight-rope walkers
Find democracy in public urinals.
Black-robed ministers stand with hatchet crosses;
The headsman hacks a worker's life to bone;
Within an idiot's laugh a people's tears;
Within the victim's courage a people's fears.

You are the headless victim, you the white-faced
Buffoon with damp eyes, pleading for work,
For a loaf of bread, kicked by the donkey,
Strung by the tight-rope, struck by the ax.

Streamers of joy—the ticker-tape weaves
Through the city, curls in wind-blown loops,
Winds with the wind through moonlit streets,
Spins colored threads among the populace,
Designs a fluttering New Year's.
The ticker-tape falls.

Toll, bells, toll!
Dust in the grease cups, the engine still,
Webs across the broken panes, a torn time-card,
Splintered glass, and scrap in the factory yard.

The nickelodeon sprinkles perfumed
Nickel sentiments with a western air.

H. G.

Art?
The sounds of leaves, books, burned in the brown season;
The silver bullets of metallic nightingales;
And the diplomatic notes, the bowing,
The scraping of generals and foreign corps,
The war bonds floated by financiers;
And all the instruments,
Guns, flame-guns, machine-guns, gas-guns,
Maneuvers, charts, letters of state, and
Cannon drawn by mules, make death, too, an art.

Toll, bells, toll, a midnight mood and hour,
Death's carnival, bomb in a boudoir.

II

The moon is a spider's eye. The moon
Makes of an ashcan the golden grail.
And hungry hands dig in the holy pot
And find an age's medieval rot.
Here is alchemy at a moonlit hour.
Down atomic orbits, science tracks an electron
And finds god's footsteps pacing the universe.
Oh here's a knowledge to make
Fools wise, thieves honest, heroes of rogues.
Science, indeed, is miraculous.
Step right up, folks, and see
The mathematician pen on an atom,
Three hundred words to the cubic millimeter,
Universal law, the fifth psalm of the Bible.

And acclaim cries: "Sir, you are superb,
You have rendered everything meaningless!"

Where are the more magnificent,
The men with labor in their hands,
The hand's touch that renders things their meaning,
The spade, the seed, and sowers—they who bring
To green altars marriages of spring?
Will cold winds nip nuptials in the bud?
Is man's mastery of earth a mystery?
And man's wealth, abundant, so penurious,
A plenitude in rags, famine-fattened?
How long do mansions built on hovels stand?
Who played with flames and cannot quench the fire?
What fool blows a false horn?
What trumpet breath of what false dawn,
What false wind wills the fire out?
Can all the holy waters of christendom
Drown this conflagration in the east
Where morning's firelings flame?
Does man walk upward down a hill?
Will the sun
stand
still?

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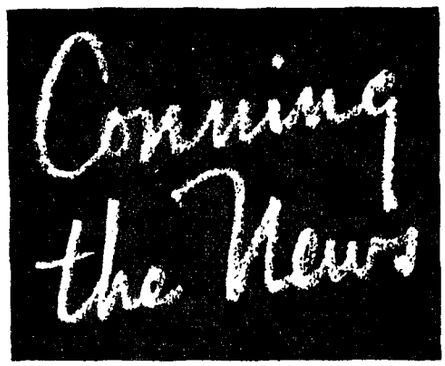

Covering the events of the week ending January 4

HAIR-RAISING throughout its length, 1936 faded out in character as the guns of the Nazi cruiser *Koenigsberg* boomed out over the Bay of Biscay. The target for the *Koenigsberg's* shells was the Spanish merchant vessel *Soton,* steaming its way toward the harbor of Bilbao. But the battered structure of world peace was the target of the Nazis in no less literal a sense. The attack on the *Soton* was the first openly acknowledged military action by Germany—or any other foreign power—in the Spanish crisis, and the Spanish embassy in Paris was quick to brand it "an act of war against the Spanish Republic." On the same day, the German battleship *Graf Spee* seized the Spanish steamer *Aragon,* and the subsequent capture of a freighter carrying loyalist food supplies brought to three the toll of ships stopped by the Nazis.

Replying to assertions from Berlin that Spain's retention of war materials that made up part of the cargo of the German freighter *Palos* justified retaliatory measures, Foreign Minister Alvarez del Vayo insisted that "Spain exercised an indisputable right—the right of searching and detaining the *Palos* and the right of confiscation of war materials destined for the rebels." Declaring the *Palos* incident a mere subterfuge, Del Vayo exposed the true motives behind the Nazi naval aggression: "The intervention of the German fleet in recent days has the double motive of collaborating in the insurgent attack and rendering ineffective the new plan of control, elaborated by the London [Non-Intervention] committee, before it could be put into practice." The Spanish government, he declared, would resist further instances of aggression "with all means at our command." Simultaneously came reports from Bilbao stating that the tiny autonomous Basque Republic was ready to defy with shell-fire continued German interference with Spanish shipping.

While the entrance of German naval units into open combat indicated that large-scale shipment of Reich army men to the aid of Franco was no longer considered an adequate form of intervention, traffic in Nazi "volunteers" continued unabated. According to a New York *Times* correspondent in Berlin, nearly a thousand Germans fighting on Franco's side have been killed to date. From this figure the writer concluded that estimates placing the number of German volunteers in Spain between ten and twelve thousand were "conservative." Describing popular reactions toward the death toll, the same correspondent succinctly noted, "While relatives are forbidden to publish their grief, knowledge of their loss is already spreading and is not making the Spanish enterprise more popular here."

THOUGH more than a week had passed since France and Britain asked Hitler to act against further shipments of "volunteers," der Fuehrer did not deign to reply. His silence was in marked contrast to the prompt acceptance of the suggestion by the Soviet Union, which insisted, moreover, through Maxim Litvinov, that the ban be instituted immediately and that it be implemented with effective control measures. Whatever Hitler's eventual reply to London and Paris, his real intentions were made evident by the wanton intervention of the Nazi fleet.

While the military situation on the peninsula remained essentially unchanged, government troops continued to effect slight advances. On the northeast front, loyalists converged on Siguenza, the capture of which would afford a safeguard against rebel attempts to cut the highway running from Madrid to Valencia. Reports from southern Spain were not as favorable for the government, particularly in the region of Cordoba, where small reverses were suffered by loyalist militiamen. Though Madrid and lesser government-held cities were the object of intermittent artillery fire and air bombing, newspaper correspondents were unanimous in noting that the loyalist morale continued to soar. Simultaneously, dispatches emphasized the steady trickle of deserters from Franco's lines and the inferior morale of foreign fascist troops, fighting under compulsion, in contrast to the zealous anti-fascists of the International Brigade.

Hopes generated by London and Paris chancelleries to the effect that the newly achieved accord between Great Britain and Italy might mean the end of Rome's intervention in Spain were dashed by the confirmed report from Gibraltar that 10,000 Italian soldiers had landed and were en route to rebel Seville. Nor did Italy demonstrate any readiness to evacuate its armed forces from the Balearic Islands. In the published text of the treaty, Britain and Italy recognized their common freedom of transit through the Mediterranean, and disclaimed any desire to modify or to see modified the territorial status quo in the Mediterranean area. The latter clause was interpreted in Rome as openly identifying Britain with Mussolini's determination not to countenance a leftist regime in Catalonia or elsewhere in Spain. Italy's pledges were viewed cynically in Britain, one newspaper characterizing the treaty-signing Duce as "the street-walker of the Mediterranean."

Concerned as she was with the increasingly turbulent situation in Europe, Britain was forced to keep a weather eye cocked on her restive empire in southern Asia, where a two-fold struggle was in progress at the annual convention of the Indian National Congress. One cleavage was between the British rulers of India and the Indian nationalists, led by Jawaharlal Nehru, Socialist president of the congress, over the new Indian constitution. The other was between the genuine Indian nationalists and the tools of Britain, led by Mahatma Gandhi. Passed last year by the British parliament, the constitution had been imposed without consent of those who were to be ruled by it and contained such hated provisions as a Criminal Law Amendment Act directed against civil liberties, press and censorship laws, and prohibition of "dangerous" books. The constitution was rejected by the Congress as "a betrayal of India's struggle for freedom, a strengthening of the hold of British imperialism, and further exploitation of India's masses."

Still farther east, the Japanese saber rattled again. From Tokyo issued a series of explosive, threatening blasts as settlement of the Chiang Kai-shek kidnaping episode paved the way for the continuing unification of China. Shensi's former war-lord, Chang Hsueh-liang, drew a ten-year jail sentence for the kidnaping, but was pardoned after a personal plea by Chiang. Following Chinese custom, Chiang offered his resignation as commander-in-chief of the national army and chairman of the Executive Yuan (council) because of his carelessness in allowing himself to be kidnaped. With his resignation twice refused, however, he remained China's most powerful figure.

AMERICANS who thought their country far removed from the turmoil of the Old World were jolted out of their complacency when the Spanish conflict suddenly became the first order of business for the new 75th Congress. Precipitating immediate concern in Washington was the request of Robert Cuse for a license to ship airplane parts to Spain, presumably for use by the loyalists. Legally, the license could not be denied, but steps were taken at once to block the shipment. From the State Department came an apology to foreign governments for the granting of the license and from the White House a statement that the shipment was "legal but unpatriotic." Concrete action came in the form of pressure on administration forces in Congress to broaden the law so as to cover the Spanish situation. To accomplish this end, congressmen found several alternatives. They could simply include civil wars in the neutrality law; they could pass legislation specifically banning shipments to Spain, such as the embargo imposed in the Chaco war, or they could greatly increase the President's discretionary powers in connection with neutrality procedure. The President emphatically favored the last of these proposals, but the first seemed far more likely to find congressional favor.

Whichever plan is adopted, the prevailing attitude in Washington would place the foreign-supported Franco junta on the same plane as the legally constituted government of Spain. "We know that this is a struggle between two

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opposing philosophies of government, rather than merely a rebellion in Spain," said Senator Pittman (D., Nev.), who promised to see emergency legislation through in time to head off the Cuse shipment. Short-lived was the jubilation in Madrid, which had heralded first news of the shipment as a sign of friendship from a fellow-democracy. "The United States government," Madrid's *Socialista* had joyfully pointed out, "limits itself to recalling what other governments have forgotten, which is that in Spain it is the legitimate government to which respect and assistance are owed."

SENATORS and representatives, filtering into Washington for the opening of the 75th Congress, suddenly discovered that relief would not be the only far-reaching problem of the session. Aside from fundamentally changing the neutrality law, they faced a fresh demand for sweeping labor legislation, including a constitutional amendment. In view of Speaker of the House Bankhead's opinion only two weeks ago that there would be little legislation that would "disturb business," two statements from the highest sources occasioned considerable surprise. The first was President Roosevelt's remark to the press that he favored federal action to eliminate child labor, long working hours, and starvation wages. Roosevelt denied that he would attempt to restore the N.R.A. and refused to speak of a constitutional amendment, but what were presumably his sentiments were expanded a few days later by Senator Robinson (D., Ark.), majority leader and administration spokesman in the Senate. Finding it "incomprehensible" that neither state nor federal governments should be able to prevent the exploitation of workers, Robinson called for action. While he would support, he said, "any legislation which I am convinced would make possible reasonable control by public authority over the subject of maximum hours and minimum wages," Robinson believed that "a well-considered constitutional amendment may prove the best method."

Back of the Roosevelt-Robinson conviction that "something must be done" was a swiftly-moving strike wave which threatened to engulf the country's major industries unless labor were awarded at least a meager share in the fruits of the current business spurt. Led by the United Automobile Workers of America, sit-down strikers tied up four General Motors plants at Flint and one at Cleveland, when the corporation persisted in its refusal to deal on a national scale with the union as bargaining agent for its employees. Homer Martin, international president of the U.A.W.A., termed the strikes "A warning to General Motors Corporation that we mean business." Upward of 25,000 men were directly involved and thousands of others were affected as the stoppages began to make themselves felt in factories which ordinarily feed the struck plants with supplies. A union conference at Flint, attended by representatives from ten cities, moved to extend the strike to General Motors' 135,000 production workers should the company continue in its refusal to confer with the union for a settlement. The conference adopted a program of demands to serve as the basis of an agreement. Most important of these were abolition of piece work, a 30-hour work week and a six-hour work day, joint regulation of production speed in plants by union committees and management, reinstatement of workers unjustly discharged, and recognition of the U.A.W.A. as the sole employee representative in collective bargaining.

Lester Polakov

"Street-Walker of the Mediterranean"

In Flint, contingents of workers remained within the closed plants, receiving food from sympathizers and relatives outside. Extremely irked, vice-president Knudsen of General Motors railed against "illegal possession" of the plants. In a letter to Martin, he declared that company heads were not averse to "general discussions" with the union, but insisted again that all bargaining would have to be handled through local plant managers. This stand was bitterly condemned by C.I.O. Chairman John L. Lewis in the course of a New Year's Day radio address. Citing the General Motors situation as an instance of "employer trouble," Lewis remarked, "It is absurd for such a corporation to pretend that its policies are settled locally . . . General Motors is indeed a du Pont controlled organization, and it is the du Ponts and not the local plant managers, who lay out the broad lines of labor policies." Elsewhere in his speech, Lewis hailed the coming year as one which would witness "an unparalleled growth in the numerical strength of labor in the heretofore unorganized industries, and the definite achievement of modern collective bargaining on a wide front where it heretofore has not existed."

NEGOTIATIONS in the Pacific Coast maritime strike remained deadlocked as shipowners refused the demand of the officers' unions for preferential hiring. On the East Coast the week's excitement was provided by Jersey City's acting police chief, Harry Walsh who objected to the use of a saloon as a meeting place for striking seamen. Dashing into the saloon, high-handed Harry drove out all the customers, removed the owner's license, and placed a padlock on the door. "It's a hangout for Communists," was his only comment. State License Commissioner Brudet scored the action, asserting that it was no more illegal for a Communist to enter a saloon than for "a Republican or a Prohibitionist."

Despite the lawless police chief, strikers tied up the President Harrison, the sole Dollar Line vessel which had remained unaffected by the strike, when she arrived at her dock in Jersey City. At a mass meeting the strikers approved an agreement with the American-Foreign Steamship Company, an intercoastal line. Unflinching in his loyalty to the big shipowners, strikebreaking Joe Ryan ordered members of his International Longshoremen's Association to refuse to handle cargo for this company or others which settle with the seamen.

The East Coast strikers' ranks were augmented when Picket Card 12,259 was issued to Lawrence Simpson. Arriving in New York after eighteen months of confinement in concentration camps and jails for aiding German anti-Nazis, Simpson lost no time in making his way to strike headquarters after a reception staged for him on the dock.

Labor scored a major legal victory when New York State's Supreme Court Justice McCook outlawed "runaway" shops in a suit brought by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union against two New York City dress firms. Breaking their agreements with the union, the companies had moved their factories to a small town in Pennsylvania to take advantage of depressed wage standards. They were ordered by the court to shift their production back to New York, to rehire the union employees whom they had locked out, and to pay damages to their workers for wages lost during the run-away period.

Two other court decisions, of perhaps even greater importance, were handed down by the United States Supreme Court the day before Congress convened. One upheld the federal law permitting states to regulate or prohibit the sale of prison-made goods from other states, thus divesting these products of their interstate character. If Congress is permitted to do this for prison-made goods, reasoned New Deal lawyers, why not for goods which are made under conditions violating the old N.R.A. labor standards? The Court's second contribution to national welfare was a unanimous decision to set aside the conviction of Dirk De Jonge, Oregon Communist under sentence for violating Oregon's criminal syndicalism law. Without declaring the law unconstitutional, the Court denounced its application to one whose "sole offense . . . was that he had assisted in the conduct of a public meeting, albeit otherwise lawful, which was held under the auspices of the Communist Party." Denying the state's right to forbid meetings simply because they are held by Communists, the Court ruled that "the right to peaceable assembly is a right cognate to those of free speech and free press and is equally fundamental." The decision raised hopes for a reversal of the Georgia conviction of Angelo Herndon.

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Whither the Railroad Unions?

The exclusive brotherhoods have awakened somewhat, but the rank and file have yet to fully rouse their leaders

By Bernard Harden

EARLY in December the executives of five powerful railroad brotherhoods announced, rather belatedly, that they were about to consider asking for a wage increase for their membership. What is surprising is that negotiations for substantial increases were not begun long ago, and that only five of the twenty-two standard railroad organizations have given notice of this intention. Will these deliberations result in a demand for an increase that will meet the rising cost of living? This is hardly likely. Indications are that the railroad labor executives, given to company-worker collaboration, have made this announcement under pressure from below. How otherwise can we explain the fact that these unions, among the most powerful in the labor movement, have remained passive, while wage increases were being won in the mass-production industries? In past months, while the offensive was being taken by other unions, we saw the spectacle of the workers on the Louisiana and Arkansas railroads waging an isolated, defensive struggle to maintain their wage agreement. The fighting qualities of railroad labor were fully displayed in this struggle, and are a guarantee that under a progressive leadership, railroad workers could realize the program of demands that has for so many years remained on paper. The winning of the six-hour day, their most vital demand, would go far to alleviate the mass unemployment now gripping the industry.

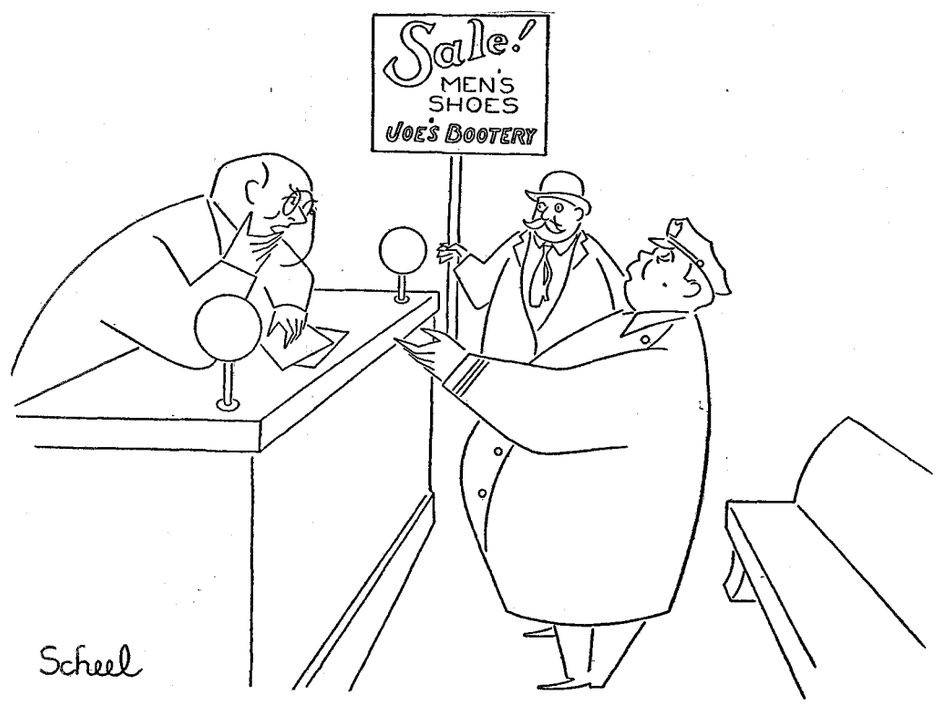
But the barrier to the realization of this program has always been the deep divisions flowing from outmoded craft unionism and long-sustained jurisdictional disputes. The formal unity expressed in the association of the railway labor executives of the twenty-two unions has so far had little real value for the rank and file. Only in one recent instance have the railway labor chiefs shown complete unanimity: that was in 1931-2, when they induced the workers to accept a 10-percent wage reduction. Nor can we ignore these leaders' passivity in face of the layoffs that since 1920 have reduced the working force from 2,250,000 to approximately 1,000,000 in 1936.

Under these circumstances, the unemployed railroad men clung to one hope: that an upturn in business would mean restoration of their jobs. But even this hope has been dashed. Rationalization, begun on a large scale following the war, had been continued and intensified since 1930. Balance sheets for the first eight months of 1936 show an increase of 38.2 percent in net operating income over the same period for 1935, while employment figures for the month of September 1936 show an increase of only 9.23 percent over September 1935.

But this is not all. A layoff of an additional 250,000 men is imminent. This will result from the consummation of the nation-wide consolidation of terminals, yards, repair shops, and services in general. Consolidation plans were completed under the guidance of Railroad Coördinator Joseph B. Eastman, who was appointed by Roosevelt under the terms of the Emergency Transportation Act of 1933. The entire benefits, estimated by Eastman himself at $56,000,000 annually, will go to the bond- and stock-holders.

IN THIS situation, the railroad labor leaders, instead of fighting to preserve the jobs of their membership through the establishment of the six-hour day, conceded the right of the companies to dismiss approximately 25 percent of their employees. On May 21 of this year they signed a national agreement which provided that a dismissal wage would be paid to all workers losing their jobs as a result of consolidations. Under this agreement, men displaced from service would receive 60 percent of their wages for periods ranging up to five years, according to length of service. This betrayal of the workers was hailed in conservative labor circles as an outstanding achievement. Their arguments ran: consolidations could not be opposed because they made for improved organization in one of the vital industries of our country; labor men cannot oppose technological advance. It never occurred to them to ask, "Why must all the benefits of technological progress go to the bond-holders?" It never occurred to them that to agree to throw a quarter of a million men on the industrial scrap heap without hope of finding places in other industries was the worst kind of treachery. True, this was the first time that an important employers' group had agreed to the principle of a dismissal wage, but it is also tragically true that this was the first time a group of trade-union leaders signified their willingness to collaborate in dismissing such a vast number of workers. To agree to this without submitting the matter to their membership reveals that they were fully conscious of the shady character of their act. It is also a biting commentary on the utter lack of real democracy in the unions.

For many railroad workers this was the last straw. It jolted them into a growing consciousness of the need for unified action on the part of the twenty-two crafts. Movements for unity have already sprung up among the rank and file. A case in point is the Missouri State Association of Railroad Brotherhood lodges. Their successful resistance to the layoff of approximately 7000 employees through a consolidation, has compelled the labor chiefs to temper their acceptance of the national layoff consolidation plans. It is now up to the rank and file to follow up



"But it did look sort of like he was picketing." Theodore Scheel

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with an irresistible drive for the six-hour day.

In doing this they must not rely entirely upon their leaders. It is true that President Harrison of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks made a noisy announcement concerning the introduction of legislation for the six-hour day. But Harrison forgot to explain the six-years' inactivity of the railway labor executives' association on what has been a principal point on their legislative program. He forgot to point out that the Railroad Retirement Act died in the hands of the Supreme Court after passing Congress, and that the outcome of the campaign for a pension is still in doubt. Neither did he point out that the legislative success on the eight-hour day in 1916 would have been nullified by the Supreme Court had not the workers voted strike in case of an adverse decision.

If the six-hour day, wage increases, and a measure of job security are to be won, the rank and file workers must remember 1916, and take a leaf from the book of the west coast longshoremen who, by united militant action, have already won the six-hour day.

The class-collaboration policies pursued by the railroad labor chiefs have proven suicidal, and will lead to catastrophe for the workers. The railroad employers, schooled in violence and corruption, will heed only the arguments of organized action. We cannot hope to reason with the financial bandits who today control the railroads of this country, and whose exploits constitute one of the darkest pages in American history. Since the railroads were first strung across the country on land fraudulently acquired, new methods of swindling have been developed decade by decade. The toil of more than a million railroad workers is now going to meet the exorbitant interest on investments that were never made. Under Morgan, the New York, New Haven, & Hartford Railroad capital structure has been watered to the limit. In 1903 the capital value of this same road was grossly inflated at the $114,000,000 figure. The capital on which this company expects to pay interest has been increased to the present figure of $532,000,000. Truly the successors to the Vanderbilts, Cookes, and Stanfords have maintained their traditions. It is people like these that our railroad labor chiefs would have the workers coöperate with. Where the cooperation has led so far is clear. If a break is to be made from the old policy—and it must be made—then the entire union movement will have to be rejuvenated and set on the right path by the rank and file. The crying need of the moment is organizing the unorganized into the unions, and unity of action to realize the full program of the brotherhoods. The railroad unions will have to step out of their isolation into the main stream of American working-class activity, and join the rapidly developing struggle against reaction.

Herb Kruckman

SEEING AMERICA FIRST

I—Relief Bureau

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The Champion of the Gorilla

The death of Arthur Brisbane brings to a close a career compounded of opportunism and clairvoyance

By Peter Young

SAY nothing but good of the dead, the old Roman proverb cautions us. *Nil nisi bonum.* But there are far more important reasons than this one for the fantastic eulogies of the late Arthur Brisbane. Damon Runyon struck the highest note of exaggeration when he referred to the deceased as "journalism's all-time No. 1 genius." Yet the president of the United States, the captains of industry and finance, outstanding publishers and editors, and the chief of the American Federation of Labor were no less effusive in their post-mortem statements for the press.

All this was in the best of conventional taste, and the best traditions of that hypocrisy which is indispensable to big business. The reaction was quite different among the men who worked with Brisbane for years, among the hirelings who edited his copy daily and daily went frantic reconstructing his serpentine sentences—who finally grew gray correcting his errors of fact. These men did not speak of the departed in muted tones. What they said was not always fit to print, and all this was no doubt in the worst of taste, but it was at least honest, and it was true.

For these men knew that during the latter half of his life Brisbane was anything but a genius of journalism. His was neither a first-rate mind nor a great soul. He was primarily a big business man who knew how to make profit simultaneously out of his writing and his real estate deals. His slaveys on the Hearst press knew that he regarded his speculations in hotels and apartment houses as more important than his editorials and columns because there was more money in real estate than in journalism. They knew, too, that the lover of Epictetus and Voltaire was ruthless, penny-pinching, and not over-scrupulous in his business and professional relationships, and that at best he was a time server at $260,000 a year, whose thinking was no more profound than the headlines out of which he fashioned his columns.

I am sorry if these words violate anyone's feelings. Whatever respect we may owe to the dead cannot outweigh the respect we owe to the truth, especially in the case of a public figure who has been converted into a public myth.

The Arthur Brisbane that might have been is another story. The *Herald Tribune* epitomized the course of his career when it said: "The son of a Socialist, Arthur Brisbane had promised as a young man to become an independent leader of American thought; instead, he dedicated his talents to William Randolph Hearst." The self-destruction of the renegade to progress was further illuminated by Edwin Markham's curious "tribute" to the late editor. "He once told me and a group of friends in an after-dinner speech," Markham relates, "that he always had held liberal views, but that the world was not as yet ready for some of these views. He therefore did not talk about them, feeling that he did not wish to be regarded in the light of an ultra-advanced thinker." Arthur Brisbane liked to refer in his column to Giordano Bruno, who was burned at the stake for his "ultra-advanced" ideas. As for himself, he preferred $260,000 a year of Hearst's money.

John Mackey

Arthur Brisbane

Under these conditions it was no wonder that such intellectual gifts as Brisbane may have originally had fell into pathetic decay. His famous column "Today" was made up in part out of quotations from a few classics. The same quotations appeared year in and year out. The rest of the column was made up of news dispatches hastily read and hastily rewritten. On scores of occasions minor Hearst employees saved the great editor from ridiculous blunders and flagrant libel.

Perhaps his most piquant characteristic as a columnist was a phony interest in science. There was not a scientific "discovery" which he did not publicize, even if that "discovery" originated with a reporter rather than with a scientist. What did it matter if that "discovery" proved to be a hoax the following day? That was yesterday, Brisbane wrote only of Today, and each day brought its new "discoveries," along with its new murders, suicides and kidnapings. There were, of course, certain good old standbys. The gorilla could beat any ten prizefighters. A high forehead was a sign of intelligence. "Observe that high brow," Brisbane would write of a captain of industry, proving thereby that intelligence and wealth went hand in hand. "Look at that well-shaped head." Brisbane himself had a high forehead which he greatly admired.

High foreheads and intelligence were what put men like Matthew S. Sloan, Charles M. Schwab, and Ford in positions of wealth and power. They had started poor, Brisbane was fond of emphasizing, but had fulfilled the American formula for success. If anyone was poor, it was his own fault. During the worst depression years, Brisbane found it incomprehensible that "with so much unemployment, so many men eager to work but unable to find jobs," trade unions should call strikes. That was the basest ingratitude. You read tripe like that and wonder why even William Green should place a wreath of praise upon the tomb of Hearst's mouthpiece.

Years ago, when Hearst himself was a demagogic clown flirting with the people, Brisbane declaimed against "predatory wealth." In his later years, Brisbane was as class-conscious as the Lord of San Simeon himself. But his undisciplined mind produced some amusing situations. He became so immersed in the "romance" of big business several years ago that his column became a publicity medium for industrialists and financiers. Day after day he wrote and published blurbs for the personalities of the business world and their enterprises. Hearst, of course, wants to be paid for any advertising which appears in his papers. So the order went out: "Eliminate all advertising from Brisbane's column." It was eliminated. There were times, however, when Hearst for reasons of his own wanted such advertising to appear in his chief editor's columns. Such copy would be prefaced with a plaintive notation:

> Note to Hearst editors: Mr. Hearst has approved this copy, so please do NOT eliminate it. A. BRISBANE.

During the last few years, when Hearst emerged in his true colors as the chief mouthpiece of the American Reaction, the variable Brisbane found himself in hot water. There were days on which his entire column was thrown into the waste-paper basket, other days when whole paragraphs were deleted. Those who knew of the censorship which Hearst exercised over Brisbane's writings wondered whether "journalism's all-time No. 1 genius" would stand for it. He was immensely wealthy; he did not need the $260,000 a year Hearst paid him. Indeed, for circulation reasons, Hearst needed Brisbane more than Brisbane needed Hearst. But the great editor never revolted against his humiliating position. Hearst kept on censoring his column, and he kept on writing it. The explanation for this

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was simple. Brisbane did not need money, but he loved it. Once, when Hearst rebuked him for his heresies, the editor replied in effect: "I write the column. As long as you pay me for it, you may print it or not, as you see fit."

After a while, Brisbane began to censor his own writings to suit Hearst's policy. During the bleakest days of the depression, he wrote a column in which he referred to the private railroad car of the millionaire publisher Paul Block. Then it must have occurred to him that an economic crisis, when millions were unemployed and hungry, was not the most appropriate time for a Hearst paper to mention such matters. So he sent out the following correction:

Editors: In my column for tomorrow please omit from Paul Block paragraph all reference to his private car and instead of calling him "prosperous New York editor" as in copy change to read "Mr. Paul Block, well known newspaper owner."

Usually, however, the censorship was ordered by Hearst, as in the case of Brisbane's comments on Stalin. Brisbane admired Stalin as he admired any strong character. He could not help being impressed by the energy and devotion of the Russians. He always tempered his praise with the glib prediction that Soviet prosperity would destroy all hope of communism and would restore capitalism, and perhaps even bring back a czar. But such modifications failed to satisfy Hearst, who ordered his editors to eliminate from Brisbane's column any comment favorable to the Soviet Union.

After Hearst came out against Roosevelt, a similar rule went into effect about copy dealing with the administration. Brisbane dared to write of Roosevelt: "He's at least trying, which is more than Hoover did." Hearst eliminated it. Again, Brisbane dared to say that Donald Richberg was an able man. This actually appeared in print, but Hearst eliminated it from all subsequent editions of his papers. And here is another paragraph which Hearst cut out of Brisbane's column, written from France last summer:

In France at one time it was forbidden by law to eat the bodies of those that died in the plague. That law is no longer needed, thanks to better government and an end of the "divine right of kings," but the workers are far from satisfied and they say they should actually rule. The old fable of the feet rebelling against the head. The heads in many places have guided badly. Perhaps the world is about to see what the feet can do.

His visit to the land where the People's Front is in power may have stirred some long-forgotten ideas in Brisbane's head. He even wrote a long column about the sit-in strikes, admiring "the ingenuity characteristic of the descendants of Vercingetorix." But he made the fatal mistake of beginning that column with the words: "Organized labor from London to Tokyo and around to San Francisco would be interested in the latest strike idea."

That column never appeared in print. Nor did Hearst permit the appearance of the column Brisbane wrote the following day, describing the Bastile Day celebration. True, the references to the proletariat were hostile,

Serrano

"My boy, do you think grandpa spent his time loafing and drinking?"

but the journalist in him prompted Brisbane to give a colorful description of the "enormous crowd" that marched for hours through Paris. There were red flags and the "International" was sung. Instead of the column, editors received the curt announcement: *"There will be no column for Thursday."* A little later, Hearst killed the following paragraph by Brisbane:

In this country, tens of billions of dollars' worth of securities pay no tax to the government. These securities, usually held by rich individuals, total above a hundred thousand million dollars. The owners of all this money are protected by the government to which they contribute nothing. The ordinary citizen is taxed to keep up the army and navy that protect cities and states and their tax-exempt bonds. A way will be found to end that nonsense. Write that on your cuff.

No one can say what prompted Brisbane to write things like that. Perhaps he was working off a peeve against Hearst. Perhaps his distant past, memories of his Socialist father, sometimes caught up with him. He could occasionally face the truth; he could set it down; but Hearst would not print it—and Brisbane, who had all the money a man could use, kept on working for Hearst. He chose corruption of his own free will. And now he is dead, and the radio announcers identified him as "the man who said a gorilla could beat both of them." The Socialist father championed man; the reactionary son championed an ape symbolizing cunning and brutality; and about him, the governing class, bereft of real intellectual champions, weaves the myth of a great intellect.

★ ★ ★

Susannah the Seeker

Chef at the daily cooking,
Scullion to wash the dishes,
Butler with all the bothers,
Maid for the cranky wishes,
Doorman,
Janitor,
Laundress,
Gardener,
Under the Madam's pishes,

Flunkies to right of her,
Lackies to left of her,
Puppets behind,
Fawners before,
Praising her mind,
Blessing her snore,

It left the Madam Snozzlepooh
Much bored without a thing to do,

Without a care beneath the sun
Except the void of having none.

Born high and married higher yet
In pomp of name and beauty,
Once glad to lead her swanky set,
Now tired of "social duty,"
The men no longer buzzing 'round
To catch *her* vis-a-vis,
Susannah's self not often found
In pert so-sigh-at-tea,

She wondered what would mean a *thrill*
To suit the mansion on the hill.

Above the stacks, above the steeple,
Above the distant mass of people
Floundering in the pounding town,
Susannah's fraught piano note
Never
Even
Heard to float,
Message from a pain remote,
Sheerly,
Nully down . . .

From all the pampered years of taking,
Taking without a thought of giving,
Susannah's private heart is breaking,
Breaking from irk of living.

Human enough to suffer,
Too spoiled to fathom why;
Nothing to do for Snozzlepooh,
Nothing to do but die.

H. H. Lewis.

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The Historical Novel

Its utility as a weapon against those who would mask the meaning of events is here set forth by a noted British historian and critic

By Jack Lindsay

THE writing of history is a revolutionary product. Only the awareness of social change creates the feeling that the bare chronicle of events is insufficient; the priestly list is warmly filled out with the consciousness of change, conflict, process. Herodotus worked amid the rapid social changes and commercial expansion after the Hellenic rout of the East under Xerxes; he took an active part in the revolt against the tyrant Lygdamis in his native town Halicarnassos. Antiquity produced no historical novels—indeed no novels at all except the freaks *Satyricon* and *Metamorphoses* (*Golden Ass*), which appeared during the period of Roman bourgeois ease. But its history remained almost openly a class product; Roman history (as distinct from chronicles) began with Sallust's pamphlets, the work of a plutocrat liberal seeking to guide the Cæsarian revolution away from extremist policies; Livy fictionized republican Rome from the reactionary standpoint of pure-race theory and the glamorous past; Tacitus carried on this work with more intellectual incision, seeking to blackguard the Empire because of what internationalizing tendency it possessed. Here throughout history runs the tradition of rhetoric. The historian has no compunction in coloring events to suit his propagandist purpose, or in inventing dialogue and speeches. The work of Tacitus is (omitting the question of different ideologies) as much historical fiction as, say, Vinogradov's *Black Consul*. Indeed, considering that it is based on distortion, it is much more fictional.

It will be clear then that there was little reason for historical fiction and history to separate as different *genres* in antiquity. There was even less reason during the medieval period, when all conception of process vanished and the only order of events was God's timeless will, the moral lesson. Hence, the way that a medieval writer picks his historical instances from any period or setting and huddles them all together under moral categories. History began with the Renaissance; stirred in Dante's secular passion for the Empire; grew subtler in Petrarch's worship of Cicero; developed a sense of fact and process as the bourgeoisie expanded; got its first real glimpse of development as mercantilism broke up under the solvent of liberalism (Gibbon, Diderot, etc.); and came to something like full stature with the French Revolution. Yet the medieval attitude, rationalized, persisted through the eighteenth century. Hume wrote: "You wish to know the sentiments, inclination, manner of life of the Greeks and Romans? Study well the morality and actions of the English and French. Humanity is so much the same in all ages and lands that in this respect history gives us nothing new or unusual."

Woodcut by Everardo Ramirez (A. C. A. Gallery)

It was as a product of the French Revolution that the historical novel arose; it came straight out of the new sense of history created by the social turmoil. Scott is the greatest figure, and it is an error to think of him only as the reviver of feudalist fantasies. He would have slight value if that was all he did. Scott, despite his apparent legalistic complacency, saw something of the nature of historical conflict; and though his worst work, such as *Ivanhoe,* has been the most popular, he went deeper in his novels dealing with the Jacobites and the Covenanters. Though, of course, lacking the materialistic dialectic, he was nevertheless aware of history as a conflict of old and new forces and conditions of life. (And his humanist shrewdness filled out these abstractions, giving his novels the quality lacking in his imitators.) That it was his perception of development which created the effect of his novels on his generation is witnessed by Coleridge, a good witness, since he was very jealous of Scott's success:

> **The essential wisdom and happiness of the subject consists in this—that the contest between the loyalists and their opponents can never be obsolete, for it is the contest between the two great warring principles of social humanity; religious adherence to the past and the ancient, the desire and the admiration of permanence on the one hand; and the passion for increase of knowledge, for truth, as the offspring of reason—in short, the mighty instincts of *progression* and *free agency* on the other.**

Edwin Muir has suggested that it was the suppression of Scottish nationality which turned Scott's thoughts backwards in time; there is certainly a truth in this, but we must remember how Balzac yearned in his early years to emulate Scott and throughout his life turned to medieval fantasies in the *Contes Drolatiques* as an escape from his depiction of the contemporary bourgeois. It is noteworthy that all the best novels of the bourgeois period deal only with matters a generation or two back. For instance, the greatest of all historical novels, Tolstoy's *War and Peace,* deals with events in which Tolstoy's own grandfather took part. One cannot imagine Tolstoy writing an equally successful novel dealing with, say, the Renaissance or the Cæsarian revolution. For, while dealing with periods still directly affecting his own, the bourgeois writer found his own intuitive sense of social forces sufficient to enable him to produce a truthful picture; when he stepped out of that area, his lack of a consciously dialectical understanding proved his undoing. The idealist

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falsifications then took charge. Thus, Scott's Covenanters impress us powerfully as real historical actors; the characters of his medieval novels are mere cardboard.

What is significant about *War and Peace* is that in order to get so close to the truth Tolstoy was forced to work out a thesis which really exploded all bourgeois preconceptions and which in fact he could not fully incorporate in the novel. This is the thesis of mass force as the decisive element in history. The ponderous diatribes in which he expounds this thesis would destroy a work of less vitality. Their value for us lies in the fact that they prove that even for the bourgeois historical novel to reach its culmination it had to invoke a perception that really exploded the shell of bourgeois ideas. If we analyze the diatribes we find that they are inchoate attempts to express a thesis of mass determination which becomes ridiculous in Tolstoy's imposed religious form, but which is perfectly comprehensible once we see in it a crude half-statement of dialectical materialism. *War and Peace* is therefore the halfway house between the bourgeois and Marxist historical novels.

Since Marxism is above everything concerned with the dialectic of history, it was inevitable that the proletarian revolution would produce a new development of the historical novel. Indeed, in a sense, the distinction between the contemporary and the historical novel disappears. For the Marxist applies the same criteria in analyzing human development in the present as in the past. Novels like Gladkov's *Cement* or Leonov's *Skutarevsky* are not novels of the abstracted individual but of social process expressing itself through various selected individuals. They therefore take an essentially historical attitude to the contemporary scene. When Alexei Tolstoy turns from the present to the days of Peter the Great, he uses the same method as he used in *Darkness and Dawn.*

Not, of course, that the material is the same. Thus, I think that Michael Gold takes a static and mechanical viewpoint when he writes:

> Scott was the poet of feudalism. The past was a glorious myth he created to influence the bourgeois anti-feudal present. On every page of history Eugene Sue traced the bitter, neglected facts of the working-class martyrdom. He wove these into an epic melodrama to strengthen the heart and hand of the revolutionary workers, to inspire them with a proud consciousness of their historic mission.

Certainly the Marxist novelist dealing with the past must always show how exploitation ruled and how the workers were kept down; but he has a more complex job than the schematic opposition of laborer and parasite. He has to show also how in the past the key to the productive mechanism did not lie in the hands of the workers; he must pay tribute to the energy of the exploiting classes in so far as they were creating an expansion of production and ultimately making possible the classless society. Thus, Alexei Tolstoy would not get far with his Peter if he were only concerned emotionally with the horrible sufferings of the Russian peasants; he has also to show the positive effects of Peter's demoniac energy in kicking Russia out of feudalism.

An instructive comparison may be made between A. Tolstoy's book and Merezhkovsky's *Peter and Alexis.* The latter has much delicate analysis of character; one might even wish that Tolstoy had some of the nuances of Merezhkovsky; but in the last resort Merezhkovsky's picture is vague and ineffective, Tolstoy's is richly memorable. The former leaves us with a problem, a mystery of unattached good and evil; the latter makes us perceive what Peter did and why he did it and why he could do nothing else. Here we see the basic quality of the Marxist historical novelist. Whether he is dealing with the last generation or with ancient Egypt, he has the clue to the conflict of ideologies, he can directly relate the past to the present—not by the evasion that human nature has always been the same, not by translating past issues into modern terms, but by clarifying the past issues by his mode of presentation, the form of relationship in which he reveals them. (It is interesting that Merezhkovsky, reacting to the Revolution with hate, has taken to writing historical novels in which his last grip on reality is gone, in which his idealist ideology determines everything without the slightest regard to fact.)

Darryl Frederick

It is perhaps not too much to say that the historical novel, in Marxist hands, becomes the highest form of historical composition. For since Marxism seeks always for wholes, the method that expresses the past conflicts with the maximum of roundness and richness becomes the best definer of history. History returns, in a sense, to the propagandist methods of antiquity, but not with sectarian distortion. It follows that Marxist fiction must in no way falsify the past, not even in the smallest detail. Its method must be that of the realizing imagination, not of fanciful redecoration. Given the facts, it must treat them with the utmost respect, seeking only to realize them in their human fullness.

The general influence of Marxism, of the revolutionary present, has to a certain extent raised the sense of responsibility, the perceptive faculty, among even bourgeois novelists.

We can bring out the meaning of these remarks by considering three novels on a similar theme, slave-liberation. *God's Angry Man,* by Leonard Ehrlich, reaches a high level of creative virtue by strength of sheer pity and indignation. Here again we have the spectacle of a novelist who, though not working from the dialectical viewpoint, is able to give a truthful picture of events that occurred in the near past. *The Black Consul,* by Vinogradov, a Marxist novel, has less creative richness, but it shows a surer intellectual grasp of relations, and therefore supplies a stronger foundation for method. *Spartacus,* by Leslie Mitchell, has as much pity and indignation as *God's Angry Man,* but Spartacus lived a long while before John Brown and it is therefore harder to realize the conditions among which he lived, unless one has command of dialectics. Mitchell (emotionally a Communist, but lacking Marxist discipline) wrote a very moving book; but, besides having a vast mass of errors in detail, it showed no knowledge of what Spartacus was actually up against, it worked from the purely emotional viewpoint. It therefore failed as a historical novel.

The Marxist historical novel, started on its way by A. Tolstoy, Vinagradov, and Tynyanov, has already made an excellent beginning. But there is yet much more to do. I have above suggested something of the part that it can play in bringing out the full content of human development, in sifting and absorbing all that is positive in past achievement, in establishing the continuity of tradition in Marxist terms and stabilizing culture. Its educative value can be made enormous.

And there is an immediate value that it can have for us in the fight for the classless society. It can be a great weapon in the class struggle. Consider the value that a really powerful Marxist novel about, say, Abraham Lincoln, could have in the U.S.A.—or similar novels about the great moments in the struggle for freedom: John Ball, the Levellers, the Chartists, in England. Now, with fascism raising everywhere demagogic cries of reactionary nationalism, there is no task more important for the Communists in each country than to make clear that they stand for the true completion of the national destiny. To wrest from the fascist demagogues the great figures of the past national struggles is a pressing need, and what can do it better than adequate historical novels? Dimitrov has put the issue admirably:

> The fascists are rummaging through the entire *history* of every nation so as to be able to pose as the heirs and continuers of all that was exalted and heroic in its past, while all that was degrading or offensive to the national sentiments of the people they make use of as weapons against the enemies of fascism. . . .
>
> Mussolini makes every effort to capitalize the heroic figure of Garibaldi. The French fascists bring to the fore as their heroine Joan of Arc. The American fascists appeal to the traditions of the American War of Independence, the traditions of Washington and Lincoln. The Bulgarian fascists make use of the national liberation movement of the seventies and its heroes beloved of the people. . . .
>
> Communists who suppose that all this has nothing to do with the cause of the working class, who do nothing to enlighten the masses on the past of their own people . . . who do nothing to *link up the present struggle with its revolutionary traditions and past*—voluntarily relinquish to the fascist falsifiers all that is valuable in the historical past of the nation, in order that the fascists may bamboozle the masses.

In England an admirable start has been made by Sylvia Townsend Warner's *Summer Will Show,* though the revolutionary section here deals with France; Montagu Slater's play on Connelly is on the right track. The historical novel is a form that has a limitless future as a fighting weapon and as a cultural instrument.

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A Groundhog's Death

When the tipple caught fire and the shaft caved in, what happened was an old story to coal miners

By Jack Conroy

Near the little town of Moberly
In Dear Old Missouri State
There four brave miners labored
And their lives were all at stake;
It was in the month of August
On one Tuesday afternoon
That they were all imprisoned
There within this gassy tomb.
—from "The Moberly Mine Disaster," composed by Carl Haden and sung by him from Station WIBW, Topeka, Kan.

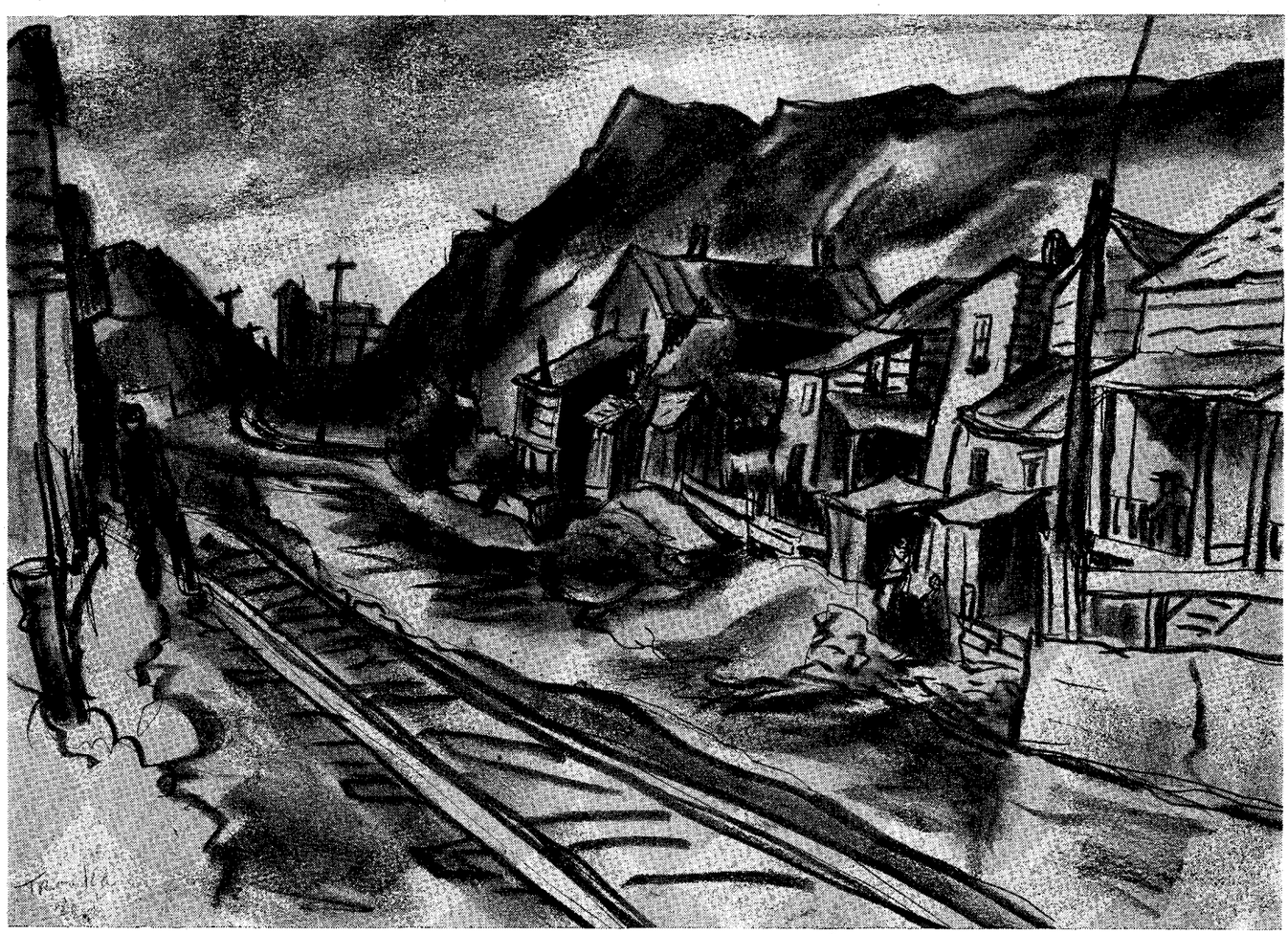
THE lean old miners of Moberly remember the good old days when the U.M.W.A. was strong and the veins of coal rich and deep, free from soapstone and sulphur. It's hard to make a mine pay these days. Most of the rich and high veins have been gutted long ago, and in the slope mines you have to wriggle on your belly in pursuit of the dwindling streaks, pushing a low, flat car before you or dragging it behind you. Two years ago there was an attempt at a revival of the union. The deep shaft and slope diggers marched on the strip mine, intending to sign it up or close it down. But the militia was there with modern machine guns, tear gas, and trucks that could tear up and down the roads lickety-split. The miners had only pick handles and stones.

Last summer Ed Stoner opened an abandoned shaft near Moberly. He couldn't afford the proper fans, air shafts, and so on, but the state mine inspector and his deputies, lenient fellows, knew that enforcing the safety regulations would mean the closing of most small mines. In some of the hollows nobody had seen hide nor hair of a mine inspector for years. So the groundhogs were not bothered.

Ed Stoner hired Jack McCann, Demmer Sexton, George Dameron, and another fellow to help him. They wouldn't get rich, but they might sell enough of the coal to buy cornbread on week days, sow tits and hominy on Sundays.

The old mine was full of gas and falling in where the timbering had rotted away, but McCann and Sexton were experienced miners, knew when to jump from beneath a falling rock, could tell where the deadly pockets of white damp and black damp gas might be located. The miners did need, most of all, a barrel of water to set on the tipple, for the wheezing Buick engine used in hoisting belched sparks that lived an ominous length of time on the greasy planks. Stoner didn't have the $1.65 required to fill the barrel, so there was no use worrying one's head over it.

On the afternoon of August 17 the tipple caught fire and the shaft caved in with Stoner, McCann, Sexton, and Dameron entombed a hundred feet below the grass roots;



Miners' Shack Tromka

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the other man, who was operating the hoist, spread the alarm.

Their friends and loved ones labored
Thru the night the same as day,
Trying to move the mighty timbers
And clear the stumps away
To save the lives of their beloved ones,
This was their battle's aim;
They knew well that those embedded
If were them would do the same.

Before another twenty-four hours had passed, thousands of people had gathered around the caved-in shaft. Many of them were experienced miners, and they set to digging in an abandoned airshaft with only a short distance to go until the main shaft could be reached. When the state mine inspector arrived, he decided it was too dangerous to dig any longer in the airshaft. The main shaft must be dug out, said the inspector, and he was *giving* orders, not *taking* them. Movie cameramen arrived, the rescuers having to stumble over them and push them out of the way. Newspapermen darted about like beetles on a mill pond. C.C.C. boys directed traffic; the American Legion served sandwiches and coffee. Enterprising boys hawked soda pop from tubs in which chunks of ice were floating. The state mine inspector read prepared manuscripts over the radio. He posed in a tub for the benefit of the sound cameras, and told his men he was descending into perhaps deadly damps but he insisted upon taking the first risk. There was almost no chance the men below would be unearthed alive, he said.

All this time the old-timers who had flocked in with their tools from every camp within a score of miles cursed loudly and bitterly. There were muttered threats of pushing the inspector down the shaft, or at least knocking him cold so that the work might proceed without wasted time in grandstanding for the newspapers, radio, and movies.

There were dear old gray-haired mothers.
All their heads in sorrow hung,
Awaiting news from down below them
Of their own, beloved sons.
Three long days and nights they waited
Until Friday afternoon
When the rescue parties entered,
Found that two had met their doom.

A newspaper man is calling in to Kansas City over the phone line strung through the scrub-oak brush to a rural line half a mile away. The rewrite man on the other end is both sore and playful, insists upon playing knock! knock! "Aw right," says the youth covering the mine disaster, "Who's there? . . . Sheba who? . . . Now, listen, Ches . . . Hey!" Jiggling the receiver hook. "Hey, Ches! Get some of this color here. A truck pulling the tub up and down. Pulley on a tripod over the hole. Guess you'd call it a tripod . . . Three legs, yeah, and made of telephone poles. Yeah! Yeah! . . . Listen, grimy fiends in an inferno toiling like mad. . . . Tub comes up, exhausted men step out, are quickly replaced by a new crew. . . . Got it? Okay! . . . Mothers, wives, and sweethearts, clutching shawls around their throats, babies clinging to their skirts. No babies clinging to the sweetheart's skirts? That's what *you* think. Okay, for our refined readers, no babies a-holt of sweethearts' skirts. . . . Go to hell, you bastard! Maybe I ain't pooped out, too; my tail is dragging my tracks out. . . . Torches like fireflies in the brush, like a lynching scene, like a, what-ya-call-it, Walpurgee Night, look that up and check on it. . . . Hey, you bastard! Hey, Ches, for Chrissakes! Okay! Okay! Who's there? . . . Frieda who? . . . This is the last one, now. I'm gonna take my step-ins and go home, the party's gettin' too rough. . . . Something in the air here, see? Tenseness, determination, the will of men of iron, dark men out of the womb of Mother Earth. . . . Listen, Ches! Hey! Hey!" Jiggling the hook and scratching his behind. . . .

ON A MOUND of soapstone and slag beside the shaft, movie cameramen and newspaper men and women are rolling in the gray dust, heads jerking with drowsiness. They reach for gin and cigarettes, swear piteously. There is a blonde bedraggled sob-sister snoring on the flat of her back, legs wide apart, skirts high. Every time a party of rescue workers ascend in the tub, they sweep her with a glance. The rescuers work silently but swiftly.

There is an ambulance-hearse waiting, and inside it is a pile of the brightly artificial grass used to disguise raw grave mounds. The green stuff looks queer among the blasted buck brush and scrub oaks. The dead wagon is needed for two of the men when they're finally brought up. McCann is able to wave to the madly cheering crowd. Sexton is unconscious but alive. Stoner and Dameron have been dead since a few hours after the cave-in.

Another one had fell unconscious
Only one had stood the test
Even Spot, their faithful pony,
Lay beside them, cold in death.
And so must we all heed warning
All precautions we must take
And get right with our Dear Maker
Now before it is too late.

The people around Moberly collected about $600 for McCann, Sexton, and the widows of Stoner and Dameron. McCann spoke at a few of the small theaters, but the story was soon an old one that no one would pay a cent to hear about. Sexton and McCann have bad lungs from the gas and exposure, and the hospital bills were high. A week or so after the Moberly mine disaster, four brothers were entombed near Fulton, and all of them killed. The state mine inspector has issued a warning that all safety regulations must be strictly observed from now on. But other groundhogs are working in perilous holes in the hollows around Moberly. How in the world is a man who has been a miner all his life going to eat if he doesn't dig coal? How are the small operators to observe the regulations? The mine inspectors are good fellows, men of understanding, and most of them have been miners at one time or other. They won't make it too hard on a man who has to root hog or die.

Hans

"So if I don't like this country? So what should I do?"

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The "Asphalt Musician"

The elusive character of Kurt Weill speaks through his work in writing theater scores

By Marian Burrows

PUBLICITY men have been having their troubles with Kurt Weill, the music-maker whose second score for a Broadway play will be heard this week when Franz Werfel's *The Eternal Road* has its much-postponed opening. It was the same way with *Johnny Johnson,* the music for which was widely hailed as doing much to integrate that strange and haunting play.

The troubles of the gentlemen of the press agentry seem traceable to a combination of two things: first, Weill's music and his history seem to give him stature as an unusual and important figure in the modern world, and second, the man himself is so self-effacing, calm, and gentle that it's the devil's own job to surround him with any special glamorousness or striking individuality.

The fact seems to be that Weill lives, and is quite content to live, by virtue of his work and not by impact as a personality. And in this respect he certainly has lived. In his thirty-six years he essayed a full-length opera at the age of twelve, taught piano at the same time, wrote music for a dozen or more plays, including the international success *Dreigroschenoper* (*Three-Penny Opera*), had his works banned by the pre-Hitler government in Germany, become a political exile from the Third Reich, and developed what critics regard as a definitely new musical form in his scorings for plays—scorings which are neither incidental music, operatic structures, revue song-and-dance arrangements, nor mere decoration. It is in terms of this last achievement that Weill has come sharply to the notice of American theatregoers this season. And he takes it all in his comfortable stride, with a quiet smile—which is also, incidentally, the way he parries questions about his political views. "They call me a *Kultur* Bolshevist," is all he will say.

During the drawn-out course of its production, *The Eternal Road* had to meet such ticklish problems as the depiction of God. In regard to the latter, Weill advised that he be a crooner. There was none of your Make-Way-for-the-Lord-Jehovah quality about the Deity of this soft-spoken composer. As might be expected, everyone connected with the production thought the idea preposterous. But as it turned out, Weill notes with quiet satisfaction, God is a crooner.

Weill is short and round, like a cherub in attendance on a crooner god. He has come to America because the Nazis had no use for honesty and indignation on the stage; and he had no use for the stage without these estimable qualities. He hopes here to carry to its fulfillment the theory which forms the basis

Hugo Gellert

Kurt Weill

of all his work: that music must be an integral part of the theater. He sees it as an indispensable feature of the imaginative theater, much in the fashion used by the ancient Greeks; and he sees the imaginative theater replacing the naturalistic one which has predominated in the past few decades.

Concerning his musical theory, Weill is sure he is doing something important. In fact, in his mild way, he has always had this almost naïve self-assurance. Not yet in his teens, and with no training in composition whatsoever, he had the nerve to sit down and write a full opera. At twenty-four, he had the even greater nerve to decide he wanted to work with a first-rate playwright. He was comparatively unknown and still poorer; but he had to have the best. What is more, he got it in Georg Kaiser, author of *From Morn to Midnight,* then probably the foremost playwright of the experimental theater in Germany.

Weill was born in Dessau in 1900. The fact that his father was a cantor gave him an acquaintance with traditional music which was of considerable help in doing the score for *The Eternal Road.* His education consisted mainly of a few months of study with Humperdinck, actual directing in provincial theaters, and more study with Busoni in Berlin, where he had to play piano in cafés at night to make his expenses. At this time he was writing complicated, atonal music, in keeping with the fashion of the day. But when a Russian ballet requisitioned him to do some scores, he changed cheerfully to the simple style which he considers more dramatic and which he has kept to ever since. It was this music which led to the beginning of the long association with Kaiser. They did *The Protagonist* together, produced by the Dresden State Opera.

In a Germany that was still something of a happy hunting ground for artistic expression, Weill, temporarily, had few worries about expenses. He did *The Royal Palace* with Ivan Goll, which failed, *The Czar Has Himself Photographed* with Kaiser, which succeeded, and *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahogany* with Brecht, which was at least spectacular. This latter revue was a savage satire on capitalism, dealing with a fantastic city in which each inhabitant must spend his money —and is killed when it runs out. At its opening in Leipzig in 1930 the bourgeois audience flew into a rage, and precipitated a battle which lasted for hours. Berlin, however, was less hostile to revolutionary ideas and received the production cordially.

Finally in '33 Weill went to work with Kaiser on *The Silver Lake,* destined to be his last German production. Shortly before Hitler came to power, the play, which was a grim discussion of unemployment, opened in eleven cities at once, a fact which testifies to the following of these two at the time. It had a successful and turbulent career of just one night. While the audiences cheered, the authorities went into a horrified huddle behind closed doors. The following day they banned the play. The German government could no longer afford to let the artist be outspoken on the stage—at least, not these two irrepressibles. Beauty and honesty had to move on to make room for the Nazis; and with them Weill moved too. The atmosphere was becoming unhealthy for a "*Kultur* Bolshevist." In Paris and in London Weill continued to seek out the most original playwrights and convince them of the fact that music could enrich their texts. Thence he came to America with Max Reinhardt last year to do the music for Werfel's *Eternal Road.* After it failed to open in the 1935-6 season, the story goes, he sought out the Group Theatre because he felt that its pioneering viewpoint would give him the opportunity he sought. His score for *Johnny Johnson* was the result.

Weill writes haunting, lyric music, employing the familiar devices of jazz, ballad, and even military rhythm. Yet the indefinable, individual touch with which he endows his music takes it out of the commonplace level of these more familiar forms. As such, it is eminently suitable as part satiric, part mourn-

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ful, even part humorous commentary on our modern displays of greed and hate. Weill doesn't want his music to be thought of as detached from the theater. It must be judged, he says, not by the standards of concert music, but rather by the standards of the theater itself. This explains in large part his success in the apparently difficult task of adapting actors for musical roles. For his music almost fits in to the cadences of speech, and the actor sings it with the natural voice he would use to give speech its highest intensity.

Of the *Johnny Johnson* score, R. D. Darrell, writing in the NEW MASSES of December 15, said: "A model of simplicity and economy, Weill's music neither asks for nor needs highly trained interpreters, yet not a note fails to *sound,* not a phrase is lacking in significance and point. . . . It is first-rate theatrical music, integrating, intensifying . . ."

The critics in Germany—when there still were such—used to call him the "asphalt musician." They meant that his music spoke to the man in the street, in the simple language the people could understand, as opposed to the Wagnerian concept of thundering to the Gods in Valhalla. The critics, of course, used this as a term of derision. But Weill was tremendously pleased. He hopes to popularize music—not in the commercialized sense of the word, but in the manner of a musician who breaks away from conventional forms and yet wants his works to be sung and remembered. So Weill considers their "asphalt" insult the finest compliment they could have paid him.

There is none of the bombastic in his music—and even less in Weill himself. Members of the Group Theatre like to tell how, at one of their most hectic rehearsals, the director stopped them for a customary intermission of silence. Tacitly it was felt that Weill, who was at the piano, should nod when they might resume. Two minutes passed, that being the usual length of such intervals. No motion from Weill. Another few minutes—and he still sat serene at the keyboard. Finally, after an inordinately long time, someone went over to him and asked if anything was wrong. "Not at all," he answered placidly, "I just wanted to see how long a bunch of actors could stay quiet."

Bruno

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READERS' FORUM

Pro and con on Robert Briffault—A dancer disputes a dancer—What do you mean, "neutrality"?

● If the public can stand another word from me on the subject of Robert Briffault, I should like to protest the recent review in this magazine by Henry Hart of Briffault's book of essays, *Reasons for Anger*. My regard for Henry Hart is of the highest and I am not seeking to question his capacity or integrity as a reviewer when I say that I feel his treatment of the Briffault volume is wrong and unfortunate.

From the standpoint of verve and force in writing, Briffault has no superior today, and on that basis alone any book of his is necessary reading for anybody interested in social ideas. Unfortunately Mr. Hart gives no idea of this quality and commits the worse crime of questioning Briffault's facts and reasoning without submitting proof of such errors.

In which of the essays, for example, does the reviewer find "the badge of haste, the tendency to incomplete thought"? Certainly not in "Sex in Religion," "Recent Anthropology," "Family Sentiments" or "Taboos on Human Nature." Those are extraordinarily fine examples of close, solid, and sober reasoning, the result of years of sifting thought. In fact, I think every one of the essays is a fine example of close reasoning and careful thought.

"Briffault's heart is in the right place, even if his facts are sometimes not." What facts are not? I would like to see them cited. This sort of attack on Briffault has long been the retort of the academic critics to such works as *The Mothers* and *Rational Evolution,* and yet *The Mothers* has never been replied to. In three volumes such as *The Mothers* there could possibly be hundreds of mistakes, but Briffault has waited ten years to *have a single one* pointed out. Briffault's works outrage every academic tenet and annihilate the ponderous anthropologists who have sought continuously to furnish a basis for capitalism, and Mr. Hart's review merely adds to the reactionary criticism, whether he intended it that way or not.

Briffault, having no academic status, has no disciples of academic status, but neither had Marx once. Who are to defend men like Briffault and his ideas which are of so much use to the revolutionary cause? To dismiss Briffault as a phrasemaker is nothing short of wicked. We have few enough distinguished men on our side without having them slain within our own barricades in such an off-hand manner. Briffault has been bitterly hated by the capitalist press for years, and has had almost no support from our own. Despite this *The Mothers* has exercised an enormous influence among thinkers the world over. His *Breakdown,* which was scoffed at by our own critics when it first appeared, continues to have great weight among middle-class people of this country and England. Criticism is necessary and helpful, but I must rise up with vehemence when a book as provocative and important as *Reasons for Anger* is kept out of people's hands by dismissal rather than analysis.

ROBERT FORSYTHE.

Mr. Hart Replies

● There is truth in Robert Forsythe's contention that Left criticism of Mr. Briffault comforts and even aids the many reactionaries who continuously attack him. The problem of criticizing Briffault, therefore, possesses a political aspect, i.e., whether it is expedient to be silent concerning serious errors, or to bespeak them. Wisely or not, I choose the latter.

The review, which appeared in the issue of November 24, was neither analysis nor dismissal. In the main it was very favorable to these miscellaneous essays and book reviews. I praised Mr. Briffault's "phraseological vehemence and brilliance," and suggested that "his zeal for exposing the ramifications of the bourgeoisie's deliberate cultivation of stupidity is worth the twitching of an academic eyebrow." And I included a warning that here and there the reader should be on guard against mistakes of fact, formulation, and opinion.

I shall confine myself to one example. (There *are* others). Briffault's well known preference for ideas—as revolutionary instruments—to social situations in movement in an historical process, is an exceptionalism that is sheer literary egoism. It leads him to say, in the essay "The Human Mind in Revolution" (p. 97) that "the entire strategy of Karl Marx and of Marxian Communists depends upon idealistic determinism, or intellectual preparation, without which the perception of class interests, of 'class consciousness' is not possible."

The fallacy is inherent in the wording, as well as in the meaning, of the sentence. There are class interests before "idealistic determinism, or intellectual preparation" aid in the perception of them, and it is upon the fact of class interests that Marx—and Marxian Communists—base their strategy. Moreover, Briffault knows this. One of the main purposes of these essays is the elucidation of the class origin of ideologies. In the same essay (p. 103) he declares: "The absurdity of idealistic determinism is daily demonstrated by the impossibility of making an argumentative impression on entrenched bourgeois interests and ideologies."

This erection of a concept in order to knock it down six pages later is what I meant by "the tendency to incomplete thought." But that is not all. Mr. Briffault doesn't even *want* to imply that Marx and Marxian Communists base their strategy on an absurdity. He also says that Marx, putting economic determinism first, did not repudiate idealistic determinism. What kind of verbal monkeyshines are these? I believe they are rationalizations. Of what? I think there is a clue in the sudden use on page 105 of the phrase "the Jew, Marx." I think there is an even more important clue in the realm of literary vanity, as exemplified by his inference, on page 52, that he has had a primary place in evolving the concept of mind as a social product.

Despite the above, I would like to repeat what I said in the review: "As essays, these are interesting, and as exhortations they are very useful."

HENRY HART.

And Again Mr. Forsythe

● This is very much better. Discussion is the essence of the matter. I have no objection, and I am sure Briffault has none, to the most thorough analysis of his ideas, even if the reviewer's findings are at direct variance with his own. It is precisely because a revolutionary reviewer owes this debt to a revolutionary writer that I protested.

R. F.

Soriano

An Open Letter to Lowell Thomas

● In your radio talk the other night you said: "If an airplane pilot in the Spanish Red forces were to land his plane behind the Red lines and it were damaged, he would be likely to face a Red firing squad for damaging the plane."

I consider this a gratuitous insult to the Spanish loyalist government and a positive indication of your fascist bias. I always thought your talks on the air were impartial and unbiased, but your talk the other night convinced me of my error.

ISIDORE BACHRACH.

On U.S. Neutrality

● On the question of U. S. "neutrality":

1. *It is just a farce.* While there is such loud protest concerning the pending shipment of eighteen civil-type planes to Spain, nothing is said of the countless shipments of fully equipped fighting planes to the Chinese armies engaged in fighting a people's movement regarded as communism.

2. *As an aid to fascism.* Had the Spanish government been fascist and the popular front the rebels, I doubt if there would be any prompt action in defense of our "neutrality." As an impartial observer, I was aware of the fact that the Curtiss-Wright Co., the Boeing Co., etc., were selling war material to Chinese forces solely for the purpose of fighting *communism* under the sanction of the U.S. diplomatic officials and are probably still engaged in doing so. Are we going to sit still, seeing a partial means of fighting fascism in Spain cut off while the means of fighting communism in China goes on unrestricted?

J. S.

Disagreement on the Dance

● I regret that Miss Enters did not confine herself [issue of Jan. 5] to her titled subject, "Spain and the Artists," for I find that her analysis of the dance in America is, to put it lightly, passé.

Angna Enters's article of self-defense is justifiable; her confusion of form and content is not. It is evidently not superfluous to reiterate again and again that one must use the elements inherent in one's art to express the desired content; the technique of a mural does not apply when making a stage set; the requirements for a poster are not those for an easel picture; the score of a movie musical not similar in construction to the score of a ballet, etc. This does *not* deny the validity of each or any art, nor the ability of each or any form of art to express its desired content. Though the dance—yes, the *pure* dance—often fails to achieve clarity (on one hand due to the fact that the dance language is as yet not familiar enough to a great enough number of people), though the modern dance in this parlous period is an unfortunate reflection of the world's agitated unbalance and has been late in redirecting itself toward a more synthesized and positive expression, nevertheless, it must be granted that it is an art form which is as capable as is any other art form of achieving definite power in these times. One must not—least of all Miss Enters—confuse the issues. It is decidedly not fair nor true to infer that the modern dance has as yet not shown its point of view; that point of view, as a matter of fact, that Miss Enters believes her art to be expressing. . . .

Modern painters will have their say, unequivocally, in paint, the musicians in music, the actors in speaking other people's lines, the cartoonists in cartoons, the architects in buildings, the mime-dancers in dance-mime, and the modern dancers in modern dance.

SOPHIA DELZA.

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NEW MASSES

ESTABLISHED 1911

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As Congress Opens

BEFORE considering the prospects of the Seventy-Fifth Congress, which opened on Tuesday, there is something which the progressive reader ought to do at once. He should go to the nearest telegraph station and wire his congressman and senators the strongest possible protest against any attempt to aid Franco, Hitler, and Mussolini by so-called neutrality laws preventing the shipment of arms and supplies to the Spanish government.

International law has always recognized the right of a legally established government to have free access to all kinds of supplies in a civil war. This is the foundation of the United States neutrality law passed in 1922 and still in effect. What Senator Pittman and Representative McReynolds are proposing, with Administration backing, is not really neutrality. To prevent the shipment of American supplies to the Spanish government, means, in effect, to increase the odds in favor of the fascists. Italy and Germany will continue to ship supplies to Franco, but we will not be permitted to ship supplies to the Spanish people—supplies to which they are entitled.

WHAT Congress does for democracy abroad may indicate its attitude toward democracy at home. Roosevelt's overwhelming majority at the polls last November was a mandate for progressive legislation. But, as our editorials pointed out at that time, the President is no guarantee against reaction. Since then, big business has made it clear that it intends to carry out its program at the expense of the people by working through the Roosevelt administration. *Sphere,* Washington organ of the bankers and industrialists, said in so many words about this policy: if you can't lick a man, work with him. The reaction will now seek to get through Roosevelt what it had hoped to achieve through Landon.

Labor and middle-class groups can defend their interests against this drive only by organized and concerted action for progressive legislation in the Seventy-Fifth Congress. The Connery Bill, amended to provide not only a thirty-hour week without reduction in pay but also trade-union wage rates, ought to be pushed vigorously. It should be strengthened to provide an adequate minimum annual wage to all workers. The National Labor Relations Act should be amended to compel employers to recognize trade unions.

Every effort must be made to have Congress pass social insurance legislation for the unemployed, the aged, the disabled, and the sick, based on the Workers' Unemployment, Old Age, and Social Insurance Bill. Those who fight for this bill should also seek amendments to the Social Security Act to cover all workers of hand and brain now excluded from its provisions. The present taxes on wages should be repealed and the entire cost of social insurance should be placed upon the employers and the government.

IT IS imperative to fight with the utmost vigor for the repeal of all federal legislation which infringes upon political rights and freedom of press, assemblage, and radio. Bills should be passed outlawing terrorist groups like the Black Legion, the Ku-Klux Klan, and the vigilantes. The federal anti-injunction law should be strengthened to prevent judges, sheriffs, and employers from breaking strikes and curbing labor legislation.

The Seventy-Fifth Congress must be compelled to face the problem of Supreme Court absolutism. Congress must reaffirm its constitutional power to pass labor and social legislation without Supreme Court interference, and the Constitution should be amended to deny the Court power to nullify social and labor legislation.

Energetic support should be given to the Wagner-Costigan bill against lynching, and other bills should be pushed to give the Negro people equal rights to jobs, the full right to organize, vote, serve on juries, and hold public office. Measures should also be taken to provide states and cities with funds to maintain adequate relief standards; to extend the W.P.A.; to increase W.P.A. wages twenty percent; to grant W.P.A. workers the right of collective bargaining and trade union rates, with a minimum monthly wage of forty dollars.

THESE are a few of the practical measures which Congress can and should pass, and which all progressive groups in this country should fight for. Such groups will also support appropriate amendments to the Walsh-Healy law and the Connery and O'Mahoney bills in order to help abolish the sweat shop, curb the speed-up and child labor, furnish adequate protection for women, erect proper safeguards against industrial accidents and diseases. They will also support the O'Mahoney Licensing Bill with appropriate amendments in order to curb monopolistic practices harmful to labor, consumers, and small business people. They will push bills calling for a national housing authority, and the erection of dwellings available to families with low incomes. They will do their utmost to maintain, extend, and democratize the National Youth Administration, and will support an amendment to the Constitution abolishing child labor.

Such influence as America's democratic forces can bring to bear in the new Congress will combine the struggle against fascism here with a fight for a peace policy based on the principle that the United States can be kept out of war by keeping war out of the world. This is the only way to amend the present Neutrality Act in the interests of ths people. Let the law prohibit the sale and delivery of goods and the granting of loans to nations engaged in a foreign war contrary to the provisions of the Kellogg Peace Pact. Let Congress strengthen all measures for collective security, envisaging coöperation with the League of Nations, the Soviet Union, and all peace forces of the world against the military aggression of Germany, Italy, and Japan.

Great problems, domestic and foreign, will confront the Congress which opened Tuesday. These problems will be handled in the interests of the people only if we ourselves take vigorous steps to have the necessary bills enacted.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

The crisis in the Socialist Party—History, "liberal" and partisan—How to get a job

ONE of the leading figures in the Communist Party analyzes here* the situation of the Socialist Party. The job is done vigorously, concisely, with logic and with passion. A superficial reviewer's adjective that might ordinarily be applied to it would be "devastating." But that would be false to the spirit of the book, which was written not with any wish to devastate but to speak from inside the great comradeship of the revolutionary movement, with revolutionary candor to a revolutionary group that is not meeting its revolutionary responsibilities.

It takes up the history of the Socialist Party from the time when it split off from the sectarian Socialist Labor Party and brought Marxist thought into the stream of American political life.

In the thirty-five years of its existence it has reflected, in the main, not the victorious Socialism of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, but the compromising and revisionist tendencies of the Social Democratic Parties of the Second International, which have failed to turn revolutionary crises into revolutions and by their opportunism have made the road easier for fascism.

Like the European Social Democratic Parties, the American party's organization and discipline have been loose; its leadership has been predominantly petty-bourgeois: its horizons have been the mirages of evolutionary socialism, parliamentary action, general education, and reform.

In its trade-union policy it has been vacillating. As early as 1905 it divided into two camps on the issue of industrial unionism, with the result that its left wing wasted its strength in dual unions while its right wing pursued a policy of neutrality until, after 1919, when the Socialist Party split and the Communist Party was formed, it identified itself almost completely with the ruling clique in the A.F. of L. In the boom years of the twenties this policy reached its disgraceful climax in almost open class collaboration, supporting the B. & O. and similar plans of speed-up and company unionism.

It has always been indifferent and now, when the issue is crucial, it is hostile to the movement for a broad American labor party. Opportunism characterized its position in the world war. Its attitude to the Russian revolution and to the building of socialism in the Soviet Union has been in the main one of hostile criticism, which the capitalist press has made consistent use of. In the depression it was lethargic, scarcely taking any steps to organize the workers.

In its necessary brevity this picture has a consistency which Socialist policy, always contradictory and vacillating, has lacked. Much of what has been said above is true of the leadership and especially of the old guard section of the leadership. Rank-and-file dissent has marked the whole course of the party. This dissent produced splits, the major one leading to the formation of the Communist Party. Its attitude to the U.S.S.R., to the labor party, to the united front, have produced doubt and discontent in its membership and caused loss in membership and inertia in its activities.

What is the situation in the Socialist Party today? It has receded from the comparatively Left position taken in the Detroit Convention in 1934, where it had faced active revolt as well as the passive revolt of loss of membership. It has vacillated with its chief leader, Norman Thomas. Its attitude toward the Soviet Union is ambiguous, with the balance inclining, as of old, to the side of hostility. Its attitude, both to the labor party and the united front, is an official "no" and an informal "yes" as sections of the rank and file defy their leadership and force sanction for local actions.

As a whole, but this time from a Left sectarian position, it is keeping out of the revolutionary main stream. By admitting Trotskyism into its ranks it risks a definitely counter-revolutionary orientation. The new rationalizations for inaction which Trotskyism supplies may be dearly bought by the possible cost of complete inanition, of becoming a sect without a mass following. ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

** THE CRISIS IN THE SOCIALIST PARTY, by William Z. Foster. Workers Library Publishers. 5c.*

A "Liberal" Historian

A NEW AMERICAN HISTORY, *by W. E. Woodward. Farrar & Rinehart, Inc.* $4.

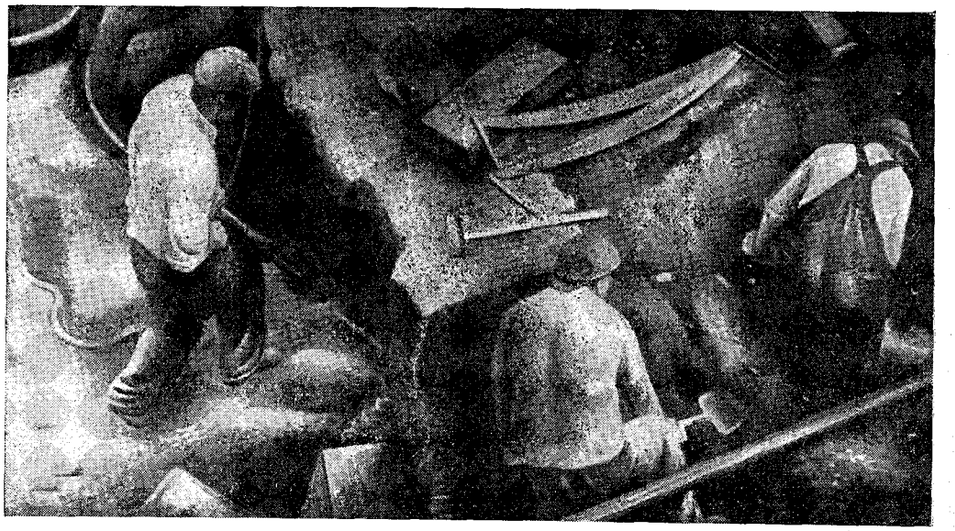
THOSE who have read his other books, especially *Meet General Grant,* will remember W. E. Woodward to be a historian-journalist with a more than common talent. They will also remember him to be in that large area, somewhat without boundaries, called Liberal.

In the past Woodward's work has been sprightly and provocative. His exposition of the homespun corruption of the Grant era, for instance, was an honest if not definitive piece of work, written with a nice balance between plain debunking and social criticism. Without drawing final conclusions, it showed an acquisitive society at its typical worst.

In these earlier works, Woodward, with somewhat more talent than his fellows, belonged rather definitely to a school of popular historical writing in fashion five or six years ago. It was a school, on the whole, without scholarship (I say this in no derogatory sense), with a general tone of liberal indignation and a tendency to smash plaster-cast heroes. Without any encompassing (or encumbering, if you will) social theory to mold and channelize their vague apprehension that all was not in history as Lord Macaulay set it down, history of this school performed a valuable, though limited, function. It educated the American public up to its own level and taught it to be less credulous about its past.

The method employed by this school was, however, slightly disarming. Its inherent, if befuddled, honesty, and its very real gift for narrative reconstruction, led to a disinclination to apply strict canons of historical criticism to it. One just did not think overly hard about it at all. But when a member of that school, Mr. Woodward in this instance, attempts to extend the method into a general history, it calls for closer examination.

Mr. Woodward in this new work sets out to cover the whole of American history, from its English background to the year the public



W.P.A. Workers

Painting by Abraham Harriton

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ceased to stand by the Great Engineer. If this vast body of material is to mean anything, it must be more than assembled; it must be digested. This, I think in all fairness, Mr. Woodward has failed to do. Those qualities, notably of honesty and lucidity, which characterize his earlier works, are stretched to the breaking point in *A New American History*. By this I mean that those qualities that in a degree are adequate to carry out the intent of a book such as *Meet General Grant* are not adequate to deal with so complex a matter as the whole of American history. Aside from mere technical equipment (and it may be said, in passing, Woodward is often careless as to facts), the task requires more comprehensive qualities: briefly, an understanding of the dialectics of history and an ability to keep clearly in mind at all times the dominant social forces at work. What I am saying, in effect, is that one needs first to be a social philosopher and then an historian.

Mr. Woodward, in writing the history, I am afraid, has neither of these qualities. His purpose, if the publisher's blurb is to be believed, is to free the public from the "old-fashioned Model-T history." Or, to quote the author, his intent was to inform his readers as to "the truth about our historical past and the inception and spread of American social movements." And, further on, "to present the rise and development of the American nation as a continuous social process." Both of these are in themselves laudable. No one will deny that a considerable improvement could be seen in the manner and method of writing in historical journals and in academic tomes. And as to purpose, one can have little quarrel with it as a generality. In its application, however, the result is a book that one views with mingled feelings. On the narrative level there is excellent writing and on the whole the author does a commendable job. As a fulfillment of the promise to present the history of America "as a continuous social process," I must take exception. Rather, it seems to me, the author allows himself to be led up a series of blind alleys. There is no sense of continuity, no recognizable structure. Instead, there is a rather confused, and confusing, intermingling of men, motives, and social forces. No single thread, no working out of the promised exposition of the social process dominates the history as one might expect.

Despite its confusion, the book has, however, caused much pain to Mr. MacDonald of the New York *Times*, who sees in it a calculated effort to discredit the capitalist system, especially in its peculiar and blameless American form. I should be loath to soothe the troubled gentleman of the *Times* if he were in any degree correct. I wish that Mr. Woodward's book were a reasoned, well-documented Marxist history of America. Toward comforting Mr. MacDonald, it may be stated that it is not. The need for such a history is just as pressing as ever. It is, however, an honest attempt to square some of the most glaring inequalities of a great country which began its history with the declaration that all men were created equal.

C. D. MANCHESTER.

How to Land a Job, You Dope

TESTED LETTERS THAT GET THE JOB, *by A. F. Debelack. Gregg Publishing Co.* 60c. 45c for teachers.

IF eight or nine million people are still out of work in the United States, it is not the fault of the Gregg Publishing Co. or their A. F. Debelack. They've certainly done their share. Realizing that "there is a constant demand for the employment of persons who are on their toes," provided they have the "ability to sell themselves," Mr. Debelack has prepared a little brochure telling the job-seeker how to "vibrate with personality" through the mails. Read this pamphlet carefully, and "you, too, can be different."

The first thing you do in scouting around for a job is to "ask for an appointment with the leading businessman in your community" —Ford, Rockefeller, Morgan, du Pont—any one of them will do. You tell Mr. Morgan your sales points and ask for a recommendation to someone in your field. "He will be glad to advise you," gladly advises Mr. Debelack, "and may be able to suggest a possible contact." Then comes the letter to your prospective employer. Ah, rhapsodizes Debelack, "how important that is." But he doesn't let you down with pious exclamations. He tells you how to write letters "streamlined to cut down employer resistance" and "colorful as the rainbow." And he tells you what employers like to hear, and also what distresses them.

Never let an employer know that you *must* have work. That always riles them, because, Mr. Debelack explains, they already have a "peck of troubles" and they're not interested in yours. No, you must "stand on your own feet . . . like a man's man." But let's get on to the sample letters; they give you an idea of what employers really like.

Always be original. Consider the form for "inexperienced university graduate." It doesn't say anything about the years of work you have put in getting your master's at Purdue. It starts out with breezy humility: "I've just come from a hothouse to be transplanted in raw soil—labeled with a sheepskin, fresh from the gridiron. I'm ready to enter the Kingdom of Action. . . . College days are over—it's half past 'get busy.'"

Use plenty of novel twists in your phrasing, such as, "I've always had hard nuts to crack, and cracked 'em, too." Or say you have a personality that will "click." And always remember that the average boss must be helped over the first few sentences. He is a simple, childish sort and must be immediately attracted or he will throw your letter in the wastebasket. Sometimes this can be accomplished by the typographical arrangement of your application. For example, your letter may start out:

I've lifted
2 Newspapers
Out of the Red

or this way:

A Square Peg
Seeks
A Square Hole

That sort of thing catches the business man's eye, and he will gladly go on to learn that you are "32 years young," that your "hat is in the ring" for the "biggest opportunity in the newspaper field!" If you are applying for a grocery clerk's job, you begin: "I know my Groceries!" If the vacancy is for a chef you head your letter, "Food for Thought." Mr.

A. Ajay

"This Soviet constitution proves it, gentlemen. Give these Reds an inch and they want the whole damn thing!"

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Debelack even goes so far as to recommend that a would-be pastry baker lead off with a flashy half-line paragraph: 'F'ovens' Sake—" Then there is the cute approach, such as, "I just couldn't help breaking the biblical injunction, 'Thou shalt not covet,' when I read your advertisement in today's *Tribune*."

That last-named suggestion is particularly good because most businessmen, apparently, are religiously minded. A great number of Mr. Debelack's form letters contain the sentence: "I am a Christian." And many of them add, "happily married" or "married to the right woman."

"Don't brag," cautions Mr. Debelack, "it is malodorous." But at the same time, avoid timidity. It is no more than proper pride, for example, to say to an editor: "My work tempts with its readability. Even dull subjects sparkle under my touch." Or to ask for a waitress's job somewhat in this fashion: " 'Beautiful but Dumb'—is the oft expressed description of a waitress. *But* it's one that cannot be pinned on me. 'Tis true I'm not a beauty-pageant winner, but I'm easy to look at: neat and trim, if you know what I mean; a good personality."

The thing to remember above all else, though, is that bosses relish the idea of saving money. They like people who offer to cut other workers out of their jobs. An applicant for the position of switchboard operator might point out: "Between calls I could 'pinch-hit' . . . and by no stretch of the imagination, do the work of any ordinary office clerk in typing, billing, or filing." You might even volunteer to do the boss's work. Thus the Debelack model letter for secretary says: "Give me two months to become familiar with your office details, then play golf, indulge your pet hobby, take your leisure as you will, with a free mind." If it is a manual job, volunteer by all means to bring your own tools. "Wouldn't you give preference to a janitor . . . with his own tools without any expense to you?" And as for salary, you say, ". . . my idea for pay would be 'the bottom.' "

Remember, poor bedeviled men and women without jobs, it takes only a little canned cleverness, a little competitive indecency, and you, too, can sit back and laugh at the millions of jobless dopes. There's only one thing to bear in mind. Don't all get clever at once. That would queer the whole idea.

M. R. BENDINER.

Prelude to Revolution

THE GREAT RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, *by Victor Chernov. Yale University Press.* $5.

THE pretentious title is unwarranted. The book ends abruptly with the last efforts of Kerensky, ignoring the *real* revolution, which took place in November 1917. Unless, indeed, to Chernov the "great Russian Revolution" ends with the Provisional Government, whose downfall signaled the "Descent to Bolshevism," to use the melancholy title of his final chapter.

Chernov has made use of the abundant material now available. In addition to his personal reminiscences he has drawn on documents published in Soviet Russia and abroad, and on a wide range of memoirs, from those of Milukov and Denikin to those of Sir George Buchanan and Lloyd George. There is nothing new to students of the subject in his presentation of Russia's collapse toward the spring of 1917. Once again we read of the puny czar, his neurasthenic spouse, and uncanny Rasputin. Chernov makes clear the awkward position of the conservatively led Duma, forced by the revolution to sanction and even pretend to foster revolution. His analysis of the political parties, of the workers and peasants, of the industrial and agrarian conflicts, of foreign complications and centrifugal tendencies within the cracking empire of the army in its rank and file and its higher officers, is lacking in unity, and is therefore confused. The reader has to pick up the threads and form his own conclusions as to their interdependence. Chernov fails, of course, to admit that it was the advent of bolshevism that averted the disintegration of the state and the nation.

Perhaps it is best for Chernov to stop where he does, for in continuing his account beyond November 1917, he might have found even the pretense of objectivity impossible. He certainly would have difficulties in "explaining" his own role in counter-revolutionary and interventionist undertakings after the dispersion of the Constituent Assembly, whose presidency he enjoyed for a few hours, until he was sent home, with the others, by a handful of Bolshevik sailors. One must credit him with a valiant effort to be fair in his narrative of the events between March and October 1917, but his prominence and activity during that period would make an impersonal account well-nigh impossible. Today Chernov is one of the leading ex-prima-donnas of the revolutionary movement, whimsically lyrical and garrulous, the latter trait evident even in the present volume, notwithstanding its abridgment by the merciful translator.

It is a pity that Chernov was not content with writing his book as pure memoirs. How much scope he would have had for his personal impressions, his likes and dislikes, his elegiac reveries and anecdotes of adventurous escapades and escapes, had he adopted the personal pronoun. Speaking in the third person, and analyzing himself, he becomes self-conscious.

> Chernov . . . was rather a theorist, a man of speech, literature, the writing desk and lecture platform than a professional politician. A genuinely Slav breadth of nature, a certain pliancy and adjustability were combined in him with a tendency to withdraw into the world of ideas, of social diagnosis and prognosis, of intellectual initiative and creative imagination, and to leave to others the concrete organization of current work.

Chernov is more at ease, and more acute, in appraising his fellow-politicians. He draws some eloquent portraits of such leaders as Rodzianko, Milukov, Kornilov. With skill and obvious pleasure he exposes the bombastic Kerensky:

> Having exhausted the ingenuity of a lawyer, the energy of a monomaniac, and the eloquence of a

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neurotic in trying to square the circle . . . he arrived at the conclusion, natural for him, that the parties and classes with their separate interests, and especially leaders of parties and classes, were only an obstacle to the true statesman.

There we have Chernov and Kerensky, the two most conspicuous members of the largest party in the country. Chernov admits the paucity of men and the fact that "in 1917 the upper ranks of the party were . . . out of touch with the lower rank." The same might be said of the Mensheviks and the other groups who condemned the Bolsheviks for their "aggressiveness." One is curious to know what Chernov would have to say, if he went on with his story, about Lenin's subsequent pride that his party had the temerity to assume power. How horror-stricken the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionist primadonnas appeared to be at this shameless admission of a will to power! But Chernov stops short. Here and there he hurls blunt darts at his hated enemy, Lenin, "a typical paranoiac," whose "great significance for the Bolshevist party" lay in "his headstrong determination, his remarkable will power, and his fixed idea." In spite of himself, Chernov convinces one that in the chaotic mess of 1917, above the imbecility and verbosity of the Kerenskys, Chernovs, and Dans, there stood one group of fearless and clear-visioned men, who knew what they wanted and where they were going—the Bolsheviks.

ALEXANDRE DERORE.

Brief Reviews

NEUTRALITY AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY. *The Harris Foundation Lectures, by Sir Alfred Zimmern, William Edward Dodd, Charles Warren, and Edwin DeWitt Dickinson. University of Chicago Press.* $2.50.

Of this series of lectures the best is on "Congress and Neutrality," by Charles Warren, who discusses the practical difficulties of getting neutrality legislation through Congress. Sir Alfred Zimmern condemns social internationalism and calls for more cordial relations between the "welfare" states—Britain, United States, Sweden, France, and others which he declares have democratic governments operating to promote the welfare of their citizens. He thinks the same characteristics which make the British successful in governing an empire qualify them to take part in a system of international cooperation.

Mr. Dodd blandly champions low tariffs and various impossible reforms: "Freer commerce, regulated industry, redistribution of populations, and abandonment of war are the major items in any system of recovery for our generation." Edwin Dickinson devotes most of his lecture to prophesying what the United States may do about collective security.

The book falls short of being enlightening or profound, though it deals with an important subject. Appendixes covering eighty pages contain reprints of sections of the League of Nations Covenant and selected resolutions and documents dealing with the Italo-Ethiopian War. WILLIAM TURNER.

THE CONSTITUTION AND THE MEN WHO MADE IT, by *Hastings Lyon. Houghton Mifflin Co.* $3.

The use of a formal, legal style, colorless reporting, and the presentation of facts with too little interpretation make this a difficult book to read, and it answers the questions posed on the jacket in equivocal fashion. "Were the 'Founding Fathers' deep students of political theory, or just average politicians?" "Were they engaged in the process of trial and error, or did they intend to write a permanent document?" The answer is yes. Many of them were well read in political theory and their action cannot be understood without knowledge of their theory, but they were more concerned with the practical form of the government they were establishing than with theory. They therefore proceeded by trial and error and by compromise, but the government under the constitution has outlasted all those in existence at the time. "Did they draft a political instrument in the interest of all the people, or of the privileged few?" Apparently they recognized the conflicting interests of different classes and were determined to protect those of the mercantile class, for "those who do not sacrifice to create capital are under a constant temptation to become parasitic through political means," as Mr. Lyon believes. There is one question the jacket does not ask, but the book makes it clear that the framers of the Constitution did not intend the courts to veto acts of Congress. They foresaw that the Supreme Court might usurp this privilege, but could find no way to prevent it.

ROBERT GORDON.

A DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN ENGLISH ON HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES. *Edited by Sir William Craigie and Professor James R. Hubert. Part 1. University of Chicago Press.* $3.00.

This is the first section of a work of scholarship of major importance. It is edited by one of the co-editors of the famous Oxford English dictionary and an American scholar at the University of Chicago. It is not merely a dictionary of Americanisms, but traces the specific American origins, uses, and adaptations of the language as spoken in America. Data of great value, sociological as well as linguistic and historical, are here being assembled.

EAST WAY, WEST WAY: A MODERN JAPANESE GIRLHOOD, *by Baroness Shidzue Ishimoto. Illustrated. Farrar & Rinehart.* $1.75.

Baroness Ishimoto's aristocratic Japanese girlhood is excellent proof of Veblen's theory of conspicuous waste, since it consisted largely in a training in elaborate, time-consuming, and useless social ritual, amid excessive wardrobe and furniture. The "modernization" of Japan as seen by her circle is unintended evidence from above that the Meiji "revolution" was a distinctively upper-class affair adopted after contacts with Europe had shown the advantages of capitalist over feudal methods as a means of improving upon the older system of class exploitation.

THE KAISER AND ENGLISH RELATIONS, *by E. F. Benson. Illustrated. Longmans, Green & Co.* $3.50.

The interesting thing to note in this book is that the biographer of Queen Victoria and Edward VII writes critically not only of the kaiser but of the kaiser's English relations, his mother who was Victoria's daughter, and his uncle Edward VII. There is an apparent disillusioned note in this new book by the former apologist for royalty.

★

Recently Recommended Books

Landlord and Peasant in China, by Chen Han-Seng. International. $2.

Biology and Human Behavior, by Mark Graubard. Tomorrow. $2.50.

Nursery School and Parent Education in Soviet Russia, by Vera Fediaevsky and Patty Smith Hill. Dutton. $2.50.

Sam Adams, Pioneer in Propaganda, by John C. Miller. Little, Brown. $4.

History of the Great American Fortunes, by Gustavus Myers. Modern Library Giants. $1.10.

The Study of Man, by Ralph Linton. Appleton-Century. $4.

The Theory and Practice of Socialism, by John Strachey. Random House. $3.

Art and Society: A Marxist Analysis, by George Plekhanov, with an introduction by Granville Hicks. Critics' Group. Cloth $1. paper 35c.

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SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Barbirolli and a new native symphony—Detectives in the movies—Martha Graham and some plays

WITH a three-year contract safely tucked away, John Barbirolli sails back to England after his final Philharmonic Symphony concert next Sunday leaving a trail of very mixed impressions. Hailed on one hand as a new Napoleon of the baton, on the other as a washout, he is a victim of equally undeserved enthusiasm and censure. But he has at least brought sunshine to the box office and amicability to the relationship of conductor to orchestra (hence the new contract) and after an indecisive start he has grown steadily in assurance. At his best he has demonstrated anew the sensitive and adroit musicianship revealed earlier in the British recordings of his concerto accompaniments: one is not likely soon to forget his impeccable support of Hofmann's incomparable pianism in the Chopin F-minor concerto. But there have been many evidences of executive laxness and interpretative equivocation, particularly in the larger standard works. When he ventured—and it has been all too seldom—off the beaten repertorial track, his choice has been refreshing enough and his performances marked by a more definite individuality and sureness of touch.

The stacks of American scores with which he was flooded remained on his library table and while three works by "American" composers were played, two of these were thoroughly European in idiom and the third a regrettable *pièce d'occasion* that was certainly no choice of his own. The Philharmonic's prize contest, bungled from the beginning, was revealed as a complete flop when Philip James's *Bret Harte* overture was actually played and proved to be quite unworthy even of its backhanded consolation mention. Typical of so many synthetic works by native music manufacturers, it swelled up monstrously like a Straussian balloon on a tonal stratosphere flight, only to collapse piteously without ever leaving the ground.

Loeffler's *Memories of My Childhood* was already familiar, so it was left to a comparative unknown to provide the only new contribution of native origin boasting any measure of novelty and success. The local white-haired boys must have been considerably taken aback when they were passed up for the Arabian-born Anis Fuleihan and if they delayed their New Year's Eve celebrations long enough to take in his *Symphony* and the genuine warmth with which it was received, they must have had further cause for dismay.

Fuleihan is unfortunate in that he has no musical cause to espouse, no stock of American folk tunes to belabor, and no membership in a society of mutual back-scratchers. With no assured public and publicity for one of his scores, a conductor has to be pretty strongly impressed with the work itself to venture its performance. Be it to the credit of our two British conductors that they had the intelligence and courage to recognize and play the works that others overlooked in all their frantic endeavor to dig up anything bearing a Made in the U.S.A. label. Goossens put across Fuleihan's *Mediterranean Suite* with such enthusiasm that it was taken up by several other middle-western orchestras and Barbirolli was stimulated by the present symphony to a first performance of exceptional effectiveness, one that is not likely to be easily buried in the somewhat baffled reviewers' polite choice of adjectives like "exotic" and "panoramic."

The ordinary criticism of a new native work is so diluted by friendly courtesy and the necessity of playing ball that it is æsthetically innocuous when it is not dangerously misleading. And my own reaction to the Fuleihan symphony must be advanced with the warning that it is necessarily colored by a friendship with the composer. But here it happens that we have no mutual politics to play and that my admiration for his musicianship stems not from the accident of acquaintanceship but from direct observation of its demonstration in the analysis and direction of the most difficult and profound of all music—that of the sixteenth and fifteenth century contrapuntists. Indeed, I quarrel with Fuleihan in that his admirable insight into these works is not more strongly reflected in his own.

His *Symphony*, as a matter of fact, did not strike upon entirely sympathetic ears. I feel that his very skill tends to betray him into excessive brilliance and display. The fourth movement of his work is definitely a piece of virtuosity exhilarating both conductor and audience; there are passages throughout the symphony where I would gladly exchange the orchestral ingenuities for a more sustained, serene, and closely-knit texture. But what a delight it is to hear a work that really comes off in the orchestra, melodic invention that is fresh and significant, a soundly designed architectural structure, brevity and conciseness, a tonal palette handled with such economy and sensibility that colors are unblurred and sonorities are pure and glowing.

Thelma Kathan

My regret is that Fuleihan does not always aim high enough, that his plan is not invariably subjected to the same severe discipline as his technique. The craftsmanship of his symphony makes most contemporary composers (in this country at least) look like bungling amateurs or experimental students. It establishes him as a man who is to be watched and given more of a hearing. As a friend, I should be glad to see him make the brilliant public success so easily within the grasp of his virtuoso orchestral skill; as a critic, I hope that so marked a talent will turn inward rather than outward, illuminate rather than dazzle, fulfill Santayana's function of the true musician: giving "form to what is naturally inarticulate" and "vindicating the forgotten regions of spirit."

R. D. DARRELL.

THE SCREEN

IN 1931 Ricardo Cortez in *The Maltese Falcon* (Warner Bros.) introduced the hardboiled, happy-go-lucky Dashiell Hammett detective who appeared to care more for alcohol and sleep than for solving crime. I haven't seen a detective movie since that carried so much punch. The detective's cynical attitude was more blood-curdling than the corpses. And no film critic or student of the cinema wrote lengthy analytical essays on the technique of the director. I suppose the trouble with Ricardo Cortez's detective was that he didn't have a rich wife and a cerebrating terrier.

Came *The Thin Man* in 1935, with a sophisticated detective (William Powell) who had smooth manners, and his hare-brained wife (Myrna Loy), and the cute terrier. It was well written and compactly adapted to the screen. The writers and the cast added whimsy to their catalogue of murders, double-crossing, blackmail, and other horrors. That made screen history and a pile of money for M.-G.-M. The critics called W. S. Van Dyke, maker of westerns, *White Shadows in the South Seas, Trader Horn, Tarzan the Ape Man*, a "brilliant" director. The fact that *The Thin Man* did make the dough, and that the critics insisted on Van Dyke's genius (whether he made *Naughty Marietta, Rose Marie, I Live My Life, His Brother's Wife*, or the second half of *The Devil Is a Sissy*) inspired Metro to make the current *After the Thin Man*.

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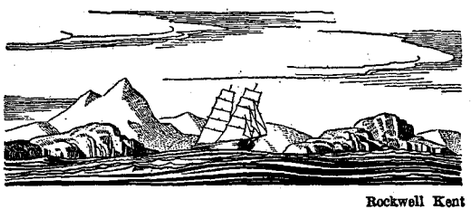
can't have enough of a good thing. True enough. But the same jokes, somewhat extended; the same visual ideas, somewhat more elaborate; the same gay parties, only larger and rowdier; the same dog, with several more thrown in, don't make for that "good thing."

While William Powell and Myrna Loy are still ingratiating and Mr. Hammett has written the basis for a perplexing mystery, the film is overburdened with *clichés*. You'll go to see it anyway and call me an old crab. I prefer Robert Benchley.

Since this is the holiday season, the film companies are unloading their entertainment stock in the form of musicals. There are two from Warner Brothers: *Gold Diggers of 1937* and *Sing Me a Love Song*. R.K.O. comes forth with a new Lily Pons film, *That Girl from Paris,* and Paramount with *College Holiday*. Twentieth Century-Fox gives us *One in a Million,* featuring Sonja Henie, Adolf Menjou, and the Ritz Bros. The most completely satisfactory one of this series (we haven't seen *One in a Million* yet) is the *Gold Diggers*. It has the best story, the most elaborate production numbers, the wisest cracks, and the most speed. All the others have bits in them that make them worth-while. Operatic stars, no matter how good their singing, have a habit of getting in the way of the comedians. Thus Jack Oakie, Frank Jenks, and Misha Auer as the members of a swing band, and Herman Bing as the proprietor of the café, are the real features of *That Girl from Paris*. Walter Catlett as the floorwalker and Hugh Herbert as the kleptomaniac save *Sing Me a Love Song* from being annoying. The flimsiest of the series is *College Holiday*. This is unfortunate, since it had the germ of a good satire. But here again there are good comedians: Burns and Allen, Martha Raye, Mary Boland, Ben Blue, and Jack Benny. As I've pointed out before, the comedians are superior to the directors or writers of comedy. Or else an operatic star gets in the way. The one film that had possibilities of being something more than a bright musical was *The Gay Desperado*. But Nino Martini put the damper on. If you are a nature lover and a ski addict, you will enjoy *Slalom,* which is still running at New York's Fifty-fifth Street Playhouse. There are lovely mountain scenes taken in the Alps by the ace of "snow" photography, Schneeberger, and an unimportant but wistful love tale. The main thing, however, is the skiing.

The newsreels this week are featuring the bombing of Madrid. These are evidently official films since *Fox Movietone, News of the Day* (formerly *Hearst Metrotone*), and Paramount all have the same material. But see the Paramount sequence; it is the most complete. No war film, documentary or synthetic, has ever captured the horror of war, of death and destruction more vividly than this short sequence. Paramount is to be praised for giving us the most complete coverage and for the good sense in recognizing that such films need no commentator. They speak for themselves.

PETER ELLIS.



Rockwell Kent

THE DANCE

MARTHA GRAHAM'S *Chronicle* follows the tradition of *Imperial Gesture*. It is a brilliantly ambitious choreographic development that has for its subject matter the imperialist World War and a *Prelude to Action.*

The composition traces in three major movements — *Dances Before Catastrophe, Dances After Catastrophe,* and the *Prelude to Action*—the ugly logic of imperialism: the need for conquest, the inevitability of conflict resulting, the brutality of the conflict, the unavoidable unmasking of the rooted evil, and the approach of the masses to a logical conclusion.

The patterns are abstract; there is no miming. Program notes might clarify and save the audience the need to puzzle over subtleties in meaning, of intention. But although the ideas of the dancer are obscured in the overabundance of choreographic movement, the emotional overtones carry through, and with them the meaning of the composition and its significance.

In "Spectre—1914" the first of the *Dances Before Catastrophe,* the simple dipping into the red cascade of the skirt that the dancer wears is enough to recall all the brutalizations of imperial conquest. It is a less satirical, more savage *Imperial Gesture* that moves slowly but ravishes well and gluttonously. "Masque," the second dance of the first section, develops the hypocritical face of imperialism which cannot hide the under-currents, the hatred, the greed and the violence of imperialist antagonists.

Dances After Catastrophe are two. The first, "Steps in the Street"—the marching of men without cause, without direction, self-destroying—is a movement that is at once a dance of despair, death, and mourning. The second, "Tragic Holiday—In Memoriam," is the charlatan attempt to mask the memory of the imperialist conflict (as England does with its lions in Trafalgar Square, as we do with the gilded General Sherman in The Plaza). But the war memorials rise against the hypocrisy of the patrioteer and reveal that not the glory but the death is to be remembered.

Prelude to Action is a restrained, taut dance of gathering energies, gathering forces. There is no goal marked, but following the *Catastrophe* the direction is plain. Right now there is a massing of strength; there must be no repetition of "Steps in the Street!"

One might ask for simpler statement from the dancer, and with some justice, but not for statement more direct. The dance is principally an art of visual motion, not of literature.

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What speech the dancer wishes to convey must come through movement, not placards. There are difficulties, and Martha Graham does not surmount them all; she is obviously wary of the obvious—and perhaps to a fault. However, for sheer artistry of movement, for brilliance of choreography, for the rush and force of energy there is little on the concert stage to equal "Masque," "Steps in the Street," "Tragic Holiday—In Memoriam" or *Prelude to Action.*

And Wallingford Riegger's music for the composition, its understanding of the text, its excellent foreshadowing of the choreography (listen to the drums in the first part of "Masque") help no little the integrity of the work. The *décor* provided by Isamu Noguchi is simple and well done, as was the conducting of the music ensemble by Louis Horst.

When this review appears, Martha Graham and her group (which performed excellently) will be off the boards. Popular request should demand further performance. *Chronicle* undoubtedly is the most important work of the current season. OWEN BURKE.

THE THEATER

TWO of the new plays deal with what have been described as the problems and preoccupations of women. We must, in our pedantic way, insist upon a refinement of that formulation and say that they deal with the problems and preoccupataions of women of the bourgeois stratum. Henry Bernstein's *Promise* deals with a woman deviled in flesh and spirit by the advent of menopause, and Clare Boothe's *The Women* lampoons the marital and extra-marital gyrations of the younger married set.

Promise is the temperate yet penetrating story of feverish jealousy and spite felt by a mother for her elder daughter, and the domestic *Sturm und Drang* occasioned by her increasingly futile and therefore increasingly psychopathic efforts to crush the daughter into subservience and spinsterhood. But this story is taken out of its own bounds somewhat by the fact that the resolving agent is a young man (P. S.: He married the daughter) who carries through to victory against the mother for a very interesting reason: he has the psychological stamina and incentive to fight convention because his life is based not on money or position, but on work. It is hard to say how important this point was to the author, but that he is aware to a considerable extent of its implications is made clear in some lines of the weary foster-father toward the end of the play, where he attempts to comfort his broken wife with some such sentiment as this: "I like that boy. He's a great comfort to me. In the midst of all this upset of the modern world, I take strength from the fact that there are, hidden away from our sight, but nevertheless there, millions of young people like him, carrying on steadily at their work." But that there is no full development of the idea is clear from the fact that at the end of t' lay, the defeated mother is left

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sobbing, stricken with the thought that with the end of her sexual span, her life is virtually ended. There is no hint that for her, too, work could be her stabilizer in tropic or arctic seas.

Gilbert Miller's production is careful in every respect, not the least of which is the cast he has assembled. Cedric Hardwicke, whom you may have seen in the movie *Nine Days a Queen,* is magnificently effective as the weary, understanding bourgeois papa, and Irene Browne (she was bosom friend in the movie *Cavalcade*) ties you in knots as the tortured and torturing mother. Jean Forbes-Robertson (Sir Johnston's daughter) and Louise Platt are good, but what really lights up the play is the performance of Frank Lawton (in the movies he was David Copperfield and the younger son in *Cavalcade*), who wrings from his lines everything that a maximum of keenness, naturalness, and flexibility can find in them.

The Women is a very funny play about the man-juggling that goes on among the young married *bourgeoises* who have nothing else to occupy their time—just such a lot as might well, fifteen years later, find themselves in the same pickle as the mother in *Promise.* There is a lot of wisdom of a sort in this story of a woman (Margalo Gillmore) who loses and regains her husband—the sort of wisdom that springs naturally from a realistic observation of facts, pleasant and unpleasant, rather than from a comprehensive grasp of all the implications of those facts. One young lady who saw it remarked that "there is a lot of propaganda in this sort of picture of a decaying class." That is true, and its main significance is that a class that doesn't work degenerates. The picture of the partial decay that Clare Boothe has given us in *The Women* (and there are only women in the cast, if you want to include Charita Bauer, a fine child actress) strikes home not only as a true portrait of a social group, but as one with all the airs and graces of delicious satire. Jo Mielziner has done a crisp and satisfying series of settings, and the cast includes such talented folk as Ilka Chase, Phyllis Povah, Betty Lawford, and Mary Cecil. Producer Max Gordon and Director Robert Sinclair are hereby congratulated.

The nightmarish waking life that a high-power publicity man lives is eloquently suggested by *All Editions,* the comedy by Charles Washburn and Clyde North which at this writing is still chasing actors madly about the stage at the Longacre Theater. Mr. Washburn, being a press agent and story-teller extraordinary, has probably been hearing for lo, these many years that he "ought to write a play about it." Maybe he didn't have to be urged, because he has turned his hand to playwriting before. *All Editions* has definite moments as a play and as entertainment; its value in these respects, however, is vastly outweighed by its stature as a document of some of the wildly screwy aspects of our day. The cult of the press agent is a special product of our civilization. ALEXANDER TAYLOR.

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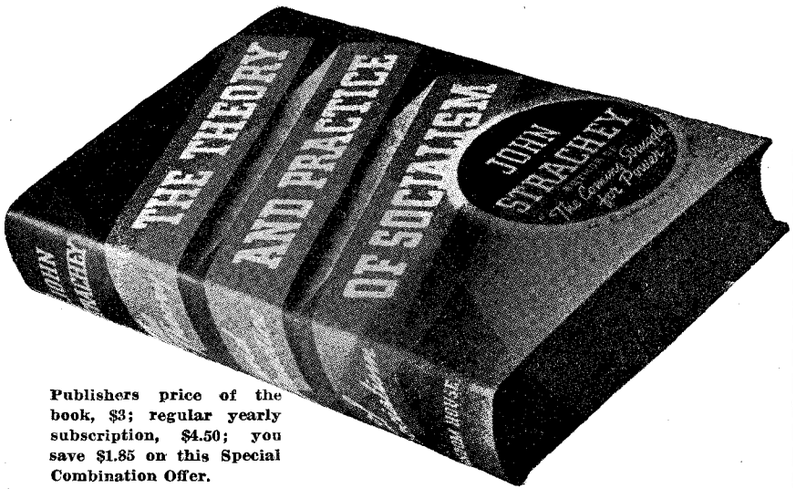

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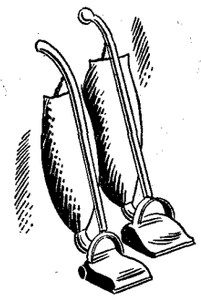

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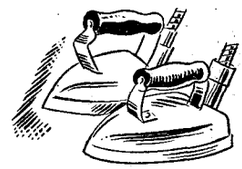

ELECTRIC IRONS

On the basis of tests for heat distribution, temperature control, shock hazard, etc., 14 models of automatic electric irons are also rated in this issue. Some of the brands reported on are Magic Maid, Universal, Westinghouse, and G. E. Hotpoint.

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